

The Dhaarmic Traditions Of Hinduism

धार्मिक साम्प्रदाय

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Preface

This is a first attempt at providing the basics of the Hindu dharma to a select group of people. I have in mind second generation Americans of Indian descent as well as the members of the Hindu Diaspora residing in the English speaking world. Reliable sources of information even on a subject as widely recognized as the Hindu Dharma are hard to come by, and this book attempts to place at the youngsters fingertips basic information that they need to have, to remain a practicing Hindu. It is my hope that even though the target audience is a select group of people, a wider range of people will find this book a useful reference.

This booklet is being disseminated under the rubric of the Indic Studies Foundation (ISF). ISF based in the San Francisco Bay Area, seeks to promote a comprehensive and more accurate realization of the Indian Civilizational experience in the world, particularly in the United States and India. While India regards herself as a Civilizational Power, the image that India evokes is far removed from that of the Indics as they see themselves. Every civilization owes the obligation to preserve her tenets and traditions against ever present threats(we will describe some of these threats below), so that future generations will not be denied the choices of their ancestors.It is our belief that the Sanatana Dharma is faced with a disproportionate number of such threats. It is Will Durant, the eminent and perceptive American Historian who empasizes in ***The Story of Civilization:*** "...the Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest

story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that ***civilization is a precious good,*** whose delicate complex order and freedom can at any moment be overthrown by barbarians invading from without and multiplying from within…The bitter lesson that may be drawn from this tragedy is that ***eternal vigilance is the price of civilization***. A nation must love peace, but keep its powder dry."

We feel that a part of the process of keeping our powder dry is for the Indicsto be well armed with an accurate rendering of our traditions (which we have largely relegated to people other than of Indic origin in the last two centuries). This book is part of my humble endeavors to swing the pendulum back into the center and thereby, arm the Indic with accurate sources of his or her own tradition

The situation is fraught with far more contradictions or as the social scientist would put it 'cognitive dissonances', than may appear at first sight. On the one hand inordinate attention is paid to preventing India from achieving a modicum of military power. No nation has suffered the plethora of sanctions and condemnation for such a length of time as has India, ostensibly for the crime of breaking the nuclear monopoly of the UN Security Council Permanent 5. In Greek Mythology Prometheus is the God of Fire, chained to a craggy rock in the Island of Scythia. His crime – Prometheus had shared the secret of fire with mankind, thereby giving them the means for sustenance, warmth and to provide

material goods with the metals that could be forged with fire. This so angered Zeus, that he had him chained to the rock in a barren Island. So also did the US try to punish India for trying to harness the fire of the nucleus in the service of the poorest of mankind and in the defense of its people. So blatant is the unique nature of the characterization of India and so lacking in Universality that the situation has been termed as a Nuclear Apartheid by Jaswant Singh, India's erstwhile External affairs minister and aptly so in the view of substantial percentage of Indians.

As we demonstrated in our first presentation, titled the South Asia File, some of the best minds in Europe have devoted their life to the study of the vast literature as well as the archaeology of India only to misinterpret it or even trash it in very unambiguous language. In those instances where Indologists like Max Mueller have made favorable statements about the contributions of the ancient Vedics, it turns out that their private views were greatly at variance with their public pronouncements and that in reality his contempt for the Vedas was total and scathing. Such is the honesty of Western scholarship, where the pronouncements of a man hired to denigrate the Indic civilization are so venerated that the dates he arrived at in a very cursory manner and which he himself repudiated later on in his life have become the foundation for the chronology of events in ancient Indian history, a chronology that we feel while being vastly incorrect is also misleading. Such scholarship today would almost certainly not qualify as a good term paper much less a PhD degree at any of the better schools in the West.

A great deal of attention is vouchsafed on denying the antiquity and extent of the Indic civilization and thereby granting India the respect ,which the Indics feel is rightfully hers, due as a consequence of her valuable contributions to human civilization. Further almost the entire western media starting from the Economist magazine to the Washington Post has been consistently critical of India's economic performance and especially scathing in individual instances such as the liberation of the Portuguese enclave of Goa and the declaration that India would henceforth be a Nuclear weapons state. It is as if India could get nothing right. It is understandable that Europe would be antagonistic, particularly since the independence of India set the ball rolling for the dismantlement of the Colonial empire. There is however no apparent reason for America to take an anti Indian stand right from 1948, when they voted against India on the Kashmir issue. There is even less reason to depict the Sanatana Dharma in the demeaning light in which it is generally portrayed in the media today.

In those instances where the Indics have sought to correct the record, such as in the case of the blatantly egregious conjuring of the Aryan Invasion Theory they have been accused of nationalistic bias. Never mind that when it was postulated by Max Mueller it was never put forth other than as a conjecture and a hypothesis, and as admitted by Max Mueller himself that 'no power on earth will be able to determine the true age of the Vedas'. Never mind also that the original endeavor to study the ancient texts was explicitly in order to denigrate them and to demonstrate to the Indic all that was reprehensible in their tradition.

In other words the initial motivation to study these ancient texts was purely political and was by no stretch of the imagination, an academic exercise. So, to suggest now that the debate has turned political is to ignore the fact that it was always thus since its inception, when the British chose to use every means at their disposal to prolong their overlordship of the Indian subcontinent

We have been perplexed and could not find adequate explanations between these seemingly contradictory viewpoints where on the one hand great attention is paid to ensure that India is not accepted within the first ranks of countries by virtue of her size, geography, Civilizational reach and even economic and military power while at the same time maintain with monotonous regularity that India is an inconsequential third world country with nothing of lasting value emerging from the Indic civilization. If indeed India was so inept and as some would maintain so hopelessly incompetent in governing herself, then surely she should be of no major threat to anybody much less a superpower . Therein lies the cognitive dissonance, and it is up to the Indic to recognize it as such and take steps to unravel the motivations for such a transparently contradictory posture.

Kosla Vepa, Pleasanton, Ca

Thoughts and Emotions

For the young couple embarked on a new journey as Grihasthya (the second stage of the Ashrama system that of householder or married couple)

The Love that you carry today for each other,
May it grow into respect with each passing year.

The Dreams that you share with each other,
May they become reality with each passing moment.

The Honesty that you bring to each other,
May that mature into trust with each passing day.

The Openness that you admire today in each other,
May that help you both realize your very best,

The Happiness that you feel today being with each other,
May that radiate in everything you do all your life.

As you both share along life filled with,

Health, Wealth, and Prosperity

(from ’Vivaha’ by Meenal Atul Pandya)

What is Life (adapted from the Bhagavad Gita)

Life is a challenge, meet it!
Life is a gift, accept it
Life is an adventure, dare it
Life is sorrow, Overcome it
Life is a tragedy, face it
Life is a duty, perform it,
Life is a game, play it!
Life is mystery , Unfold it
Life is a song, sing it
Life is an opportunity, Seize it.
Life is a journey, Complete it
Life is a promise, Fulfill it.

Life is Love, enjoy it
Life is a beauty , Praise it.
Life is a spirit, realize it,
Life is a struggle, Fight it.
Life is a puzzle, solve it,

Life is a goal, Achieve it

Contents

Chapter 1

FAQ on Hinduism

- What is the meaning of the Om symbol?
- What are the main scriptures of the Hindu?
- What do Hindus understand by religion and what do they call their religion?
- Can you elaborate on the meaning of Dharma?
- Do Hindus pray to God and how do Hindus pray ?
- What does a Hindu hope to attain when he prays ?What is meant by PurushArtha ?
- Who composed the Hindu scriptures and when were they composed ?

- What was the language in which the vast Vedic scriptures (Sruti and Smriti) were composed ?
- What are the ethical values of the Hindu ?
- Why are there so many Gods and Goddesses in the Sanataana Dharma ?
- How did the name Hindu originate ?
- When did the Sanaatana Dharma originate and who was the founder of this faith.?
- Were the people who developed the tenets of the Dharma relatively prosperous   in comparison to the poverty stricken conditions prevalent during much of the 20th century ?
- Does Hinduism demand or expect exclusive allegiance as some faiths do ?
- You say sutras are aphorisms and were used in the interest of brevity. Can you elaborate ?
- What is the situation regarding the Caste system in Hindu society ? Was such a system endorsed by the ancient Vedics in any of the scriptures. Did the Hindu scriptures endorse Untouchability ?

- **What are the central core tenets of the Sanatana Dharma ? If you had to pick the most important 5 among them which ones would you pick**

Answers to FAQ

1. What is the meaning of the Om symbol ?

OM is the single most ubiquitous symbol in all of Hinduism

The symbol Om, Ohm or Aum is believed to be the primordial sound that emanated during the creation of the Universe

- **It is made up of three separate sounds, and saying these together makes Om the ultimate mantra.**
- **Saying the three sounds together in the right way helps to awaken the inner self, the atman, which is a spark from the divine Brahman. When said in this way, Om is called Pranava, the sacred sound (sacred humming).**
- **It is the representation of Brahman, who is unreachable and unknowable. By using the symbol (or saying the word), Hindus can approach Brahman in both the mystical and earth-bound planes.**
- **The symbol has enormous significance in Hindu life, appearing everywhere – on temples, on amulets worn by almost everyone and even painted onto the tongue of newborns using honey, to welcome them into life.**

The [Mandukya Upanishad] has an excellent discussion on the significance of the Om sound. See the section on the [Upanishads] for an overview of the main Upanishads.

2. What are the main scriptures (Shastra) of the Hindu ?

To those who are relatively unfamiliar with the Hindu Dharma, the vast panoply and canon of Hindu Shastras is both bewildering and overwhelming. Just as there is order in the cosmos, an order that needs effort and diligence to discover and comprehend, so also it is the case with the discovery of the ontology and structure of the Dharma, an effort which I might add is more than rewarding. Shastra is a Sanskrit word used to denote education/knowledge in a general sense. The word is generally used as a suffix in the context of technical or specialized knowledge in a defined area of practice. For example, Astra shastra means, knowledge about "Handling of weapons", Astra means weapons, and Shastra is their knowledge

The scripture of the Hindu is broadly divided into Shruti (Sanskrit श्रुति , that which is heard) and Smriti (स्म्रुति,that which is remembered).

Shruti , the main body of the Hindu canonical scripture, comprises the following

The Veda or Vedas - the Rig-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharva-Veda, the Yajur-Veda. The four Vedas comprise the Samhitas - texts of prayers and hymns, charms, invocations and sacrificial formulae. The Rig Veda is the Book of Devotional Verse, the Yajur Veda is the Book of Sacrificial Formulae, the Sama Veda is the Book of

Chants, and the Atharva Veda is the book of Mystico-therapeutic Priest craft. Their composition precedes their arrangement into the four Samhitas by a long period of oral transmission.

The word Veda is derived from the root word Vid or Knowledge and is cognate with the English words wisdom, wit

Then there are the 3 Vedic appendices

The Aranyakas

The Brahmanas

The Upanishads

The Bhagavad Gita (the Song Celestial) is actually a part of the Mahabharata epic (The Great Bharata epic) but by universal consent and acclaim has attained the status of Shruti over time because of the eternal verities that it espouses. The scene develops as a dialogue between Sri Krishna (the 7th Avatar of lord Vishnu) and Arjuna ,the Pandava prince and is set in the backdrop of the Mahabharata War (The Great Bharata War) which takes place in the battlefield of Kurukshetra not too far from the environs of present day Delhi. The iconic significance of this historic dialogue between the Lord (the manifestation of Brahman) and his disciple (a metaphor for all of humanity) to the Indic throughout the ages till the present day is so immense and so timeless and relevant in its message, that hyperbole would not suffice to describe the same. It remains indeed a stirring call to the observance of Dharma in one's own life. The date for the Mahabharata war remains unsettled to this day but compelling arguments can be made for dating it to the end of Kaliyuga circa

3100 BCE. We will describe some of the methodologies and the results of these attempts later in the FAQ

Smriti comprises the rest of the scriptures

There are eighteen main Smritis, each one named after its principal author[1];

Manu Smriti	**Yama Smriti**
Yajnavalkya Smriti	**Apastamba Smriti**
Parasara Smriti	**Gautama Smriti**
Vishnu Smriti	**Devala Smriti**
Daksha Smriti	**Sankha-Likhita Smriti**
Samvarta Smriti	**Usana Smriti**
Vyasa Smriti	**Atri Smriti**
Harita Smriti	**Saunaka Smriti**
Satapata Smriti	
Vasishtha Smriti	

[1] Incidentally, the number 18 crops up ubiquitously in Vedic literature and Indian astronomy, and has special significance,as do other multiples of 9, such as 27,108,360,432

and can be broadly categorized into

Dharma Shastra (the laws)

Mahakavya (the Epics; they include Mahabharata and the Ramayana)

Purana (the fables or writings)

Sutra (proverbs or aphorisms)

Agama (the philosophies; including Mantra, Tantra, and Yantra)

Dyasana or Darshana (the philosophies; including the Vedanta)

They can also be classified according to the following taxonomy

The Upa-Vedas

ArthaVeda (the sciences of Economics, Commerce, Geopolitics and Sociology)

Dhanurveda (the science of War)

GandharvaVeda (the science of Music)

AyurVeda (the science of Medicine)

The Vedangas provide the infrastructure

and disciplines needed to study the Veda



Vyakarana (the Grammar of Language and Sanskrit in particular was first codified by Panini

in his Epoch making work , the Ashtadhyayi.

We will have more to say about this extraordinary individual later under the topics of Mathematics and his possible discovery of Zero and the

study of Linguistics. Panini was undoubtedly one of the earliest , if not the first among all grammarians in the history of the world)

Jyotishi (Astronomy and Astrology)

Nirukta (Etymology and Linguistics)

Shiksha (Phonetics)

Chandas (Meter, chanting of poetry)

KalpaSutra (Ritual procedures)

The Darshanas

The Agamas

In Sanskrit 'agama' means acquisition of knowledge. In terms of religious significance, the Agamas are as important as the Vedas. They are also not derived from the Vedas. The Agamas are manuals of divine worship. They deal with such topics as the codes of temple building, image making, and the modes of worship. Saivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism have their own respective Agamas.

Saivism recognizes 28 principal Agamas and 150 sub agamas. Some of them date back to 2nd Century AD. Various schools of Saivism such as the Saiva Siddhantha school, Tamil Saivism, Kashmiri Saivism and Vira Saivism follow these texts and base their religious activity upon them. The most prominent agama text in Saivism is the Kamika. These texts consider Siva as the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, the Highest Self, the Conscious Principle while Shakti is regarded as the unconscious or the natural principle who is the cause of bondage. The union of Shakti with Siva at the highest level leads to the freedom of the soul (pasu) from the Pasa or the attachment.

The Followers of Shaktism follow 27 Agamas also called Tantras. Shaktism considers the Mother Goddess as the Supreme Self and relegates Iswara, the Divine Father, to a secondary position. In Shaktism the Divine Mother is both the cause of delusion (maya) and the source of liberation. Shaktism gave birth to the practice of Tantric forms of worship which were not generally acceptable to the followers of Vedic methods of worship. The Agamas of Shaktism deal with magical and occult knowledge, besides mechanical, ritualistic, devotional and spiritual aspects of Tantric forms of worship

The Vaishnava Agamas are grouped into four categories namely the Vaikhanasa, Pancharatra, Pratishthasara and Vijnanalalita. Of these, the Vaishanavites consider the Pancharatra Agama as the most important (Swami Sivananda). These Agamas are believed to have been revealed by Narayana Himself. The Pancharatra Agama is again subdivided into seven sub agamas namely, the Brahma, Saiva, Kaumara, Vasishtha, Kapila, Gautamiya and the Naradiya. The Pancharatra Agamas consider Vishnu as the Supreme Lord of the Universe and devotion to Vishnu as the sure path to liberation. According to another opinion, the Vaikhanasagama is the most ancient and most important Agama and all the Agamas practically and literally copied all their information from this sacred Agama. It is believed that the Vaikhanasa Agama was originally compiled under the guidance of sage Vaikhanasa during the early Vedic period. Sri Madhavacharya held Pancharatra texts in high esteem and equated them with the Vedas and the epics, while Sri Shankaracharya had a different opinion.

According to another classification the Agamas are five types namely:Sakta Agamas, Soura Agamas, Ganapatya Agamas, Saiva Agamas and Vaikhanasa Agamas

The Puranas

Bhashyam (commentaries) such as Sankara's BhAshya of the Bhagavad Gita

To quote Swami Sivananda

"The Friendly Treatises

The *Puranas* are of the same class as the *Itihasas* (the Ramayana, Mahabharata, etc.).They have five characteristics (*Pancha Lakshana*), namely, history, cosmology

(with various symbolical illustrations of philosophical principles), secondary creation, genealogy of kings, and of Manvantaras . All the Puranas belong to the class of *Suhrit-Sammitas*, or the Friendly Treatises, while the Vedas are called the *Prabhu-Sammitas* or the Commanding Treatises with great authority.

Vyasa is the compiler of the Puranas from age to age; and for this age, he is Krishna-Dvaipayana, the son of Parasara.

The Puranas were written to popularize the religion of the Vedas. They contain the essence of the Vedas. The aim of the Puranas is to impress on the minds of the masses the teachings of the Vedas and to generate in them devotion to God, through concrete examples, myths, stories, legends, lives of saints, kings and great men, allegories and chronicles of great historical events. The sages made use of these parables to illustrate the eternal principles of religion. The Puranas were meant, not only for the scholars, but for the vast majority of the populace who found the Darshanas too abstract and who could not, for whatever reason, study the Vedas.

The Darsanas or schools of philosophy are very abstract. They are meant mainly for those with an introspective temperament. The Puranas can be read and appreciated by everybody Religion is taught in a very easy and interesting way through the Puranas. Even to this day, the Puranas are popular. The Puranas contain the history of remote times. They also give a description of the regions of the universe not visible to the ordinary physical eye. They are very interesting to read and are full of information of all kinds. Children hear the stories from their grandmothers. Pundits and Purohits hold *Kathas* or religious discourses in temples, on banks of rivers and in other important places. It is the tradition for bards to recite these stories in song and poetry.

Eighteen Puranas

There are eighteen main Puranas and an equal number of subsidiary Puranas or Upa-Puranas. The main Puranas are:

Srimad Bhagavata Purana,

The Srimad Bhagavata Purana chronicles the legends of the various Avataras of Lord Vishnu. There are ten Avataras of Vishnu. The aim of every Avatara is to save the world from some great danger, to destroy the wicked and protect the virtuous. The ten Avataras are: *Matsya* (The Fish), Kurma (The Tortoise), Varaha (The Boar), *Narasimha* (The Man-Lion), *Vamana* (The Dwarf), *Parasurama* (Rama with the axe, the destroyer of the Kshatriya race), *Ramachandra* (the hero of the Ramayana—the son of Dasaratha, who destroyed Ravana), *Sri Krishna,* the teacher of the Gita, *Buddha* (the prince-ascetic, founder of Buddhism), and *Kalki* (the hero riding on a white horse, who is to come at the end of the Kali-Yuga). In short the Bhagavata Purana is the chronicle of the Indic peoples since the dawn of history ever since the human species evolved into mammals from the oceans and waters of the planet.

The object of the Matsya Avatara was to save Vaivasvata Manu from destruction by a deluge. The object of Kurma Avatara was to enable the world to recover some precious things which were lost in the deluge. The Kurma gave its back for

keeping the churning rod when the Gods and the Asuras churned the ocean of milk. The purpose of Varaha Avatara was to rescue, from the waters, the earth which had been dragged down by a demon named Hiranyaksha. The purpose of Narasimha Avatara, half-lion and half-man, was to free the world from the oppression of Hiranyakasipu, a demon, the father of Bhakta Prahlada. The object of Vamana Avatara was to restore the power of the gods which had been eclipsed by the penance and devotion of King Bali. The object of Parasurama Avatara was to deliver the country from the oppression of the Kshatriya rulers. Parasurama destroyed the Kshatriya race twenty-one times. The object of Rama Avatara was to destroy the wicked Ravana. The object of Sri Krishna Avatara was to destroy Kamsa and other demons, to deliver His wonderful message of the Gita in the Mahabharata war, and to become the centre of the Bhakti schools of India. The object of Buddha Avatara was to prohibit animal sacrifices and teach piety. The object of the Kalki Avatara is the destruction of the wicked and the re-establishment of virtue.

Vishnu Purana,	**Markandeya Purana,**
Naradiya Purana,	**Linga Purana,**
Garuda (Suparna) Purana,	**Siva Purana,**

Padma Purana,	**Skanda Purana and**
Varaha Purana,	**Agni Purana.**
Brahma Purana,	**Bhavishya Purana,**
Brahmanda Purana,	**Vamana Purana,**
Brahma Vaivarta Purana,	**Matsya Purana,**
	Kurma Purana,

Itihaasa (epic history) or Mahakavya

Ramayana

Mahabharata (the Bhagavad Gita is a part of this monumental epic)

When one adds up all of the above, it constitutes a substantial corpus of the record of the Indic civilization ever since the mists of time and it can be safely asserted with a great deal of certitude that this is probably the largest body of extant work, assembled by man in the ancient era

Fables and allegories

Panchatantra

Popular literature in Prakrit Languages

The Popular literature consists of the works produced in the Prakrit languages, other than Sanskrit, such as Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Kannada, Bengali, and so on by eminent scholars over a period of more than three thousand years. Included in this category are both the translations from the Sanskrit and also original works. Since it is not possible to deal with the entire list we are mentioning a few important works.

Tamil is the oldest of the South Indian languages and in terms of antiquity it may be as old as the Sanskrit itself. A lot of devotional literature was composed in Tamil by the Nayanars and Alvars in the early Christian era. The Sangam literature is a true reflection of the greatness of Tamil as an excellent medium of devotional literature.

Any Telugu literature prior to Nannayya Bhattarakudu's *Andhra Mahabharatamu* (1000 to 1100 CE) is not available, except by royal grants and decrees. So, Nannayya is known as *Aadi Kavi* (the first poet). The advanced and well-developed language used by Nannayya suggests that this may not be the beginning of Telugu literature. *Andhra Mahabharatamu* was later furthered by Tikanna Somayaji (1205 – 1288) , to be finally completed by Yerrapragada (14th century). Nannaya, Tikanna and Yerrapragada are known as the *Kavitraya* or the three great poets of Telugu for this mammoth effort. Other such translations like Marana's *Markandeya Puranam*, Ketana's *Dasakumara Charita*, Yerrapragada's *Harivamsam* followed.

Literary activities flourished, during the rule of Vijayanagara dynasty. Krishnadevaraya' s time (16th century) is considered the golden age in the history of

Telugu literature. The king, a poet himself, introduced the *Prabandha* (a kind of love poetry) in Telugu literature with his *Amukta Malyada*. His court had the *Ashtadiggajas* (literal: eight elephants) who were the known to be the greatest of poets of that time.

Tyagaraja (1767 – 1847) of Thanjavur composed devotional songs in Telugu, which form a big part of the repertoire of Karnatak music.

In Kannada, another South Indian language, the Virasaiva movement led to the composition of Vachakam containing the sayings of Basava.

In the north notable works in the vernacular languages included the Ramacharitmanas of Tulsidas and the Sursagar of Surdas, both in Hindi, Chatanyamrita of Sri Chaitanya and Mangal kavyas in Bengali, the devotional compositions of Namdev in Marathi, the poems of Mirabai in Gujrathi, the Gitagovinda of Jaidev and so on. Both the epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata were translated into many local languages.

3. What do Hindus understand by religion and what do they call their religion?

The word religion as it is understood in the west and in the Judeo Christian Islamic world does not translate very easily into any Indian language because of the baggage of dogma and unquestioning belief that the word religion invokes in the west. The closest word to Religion is Dharma which roughly translates into responsibilities and duties of an individual to the society at large. These duties are accompanied by a set of ethical values, but the emphasis in Hinduism is on

introspection to determine the path most suitable for each individual . Hindus call their Dharma the Sanatana Dharma, the Eternal Dharma to distinguish it from other Dharmas such as Buddhism and Jainism and Sikhism

In the words of Sir John Woodruffe

It has been asserted that there is no such thing as Indian Religion, though there are many Religions in India. This is not so. As I have already pointed out (Is India Civilized?) there is a common Indian religion which I have called Bharata Dharma, which is an Aryan religion (Aryadharma) held by all Aryas whether Brahmanic, Buddhist or Jaina. These are the three main divisions of the Bharata Dharma. I exclude other religions in India, namely, the Semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Not that all these are purely Semitic. Christianity became in part Aryanized when it was adopted by the Western Aryans, as also happened with Islam when accepted by such Eastern Aryans as the Persians and the Aryanized peoples of India. Thus Sufism is either a form of Vedanta or indebted to it.

The general Indian Religion or Bharata Dharma holds that the world is an Order or Cosmos. It is not a Chaos of things and beings thrown haphazard together, in which there is no binding relation or rule. The world-order is Dharma, which is that by which the universe is upheld (Dharyate). Without Dharma it would fall to pieces and dissolve into nothingness. But this is not

possible, for though there is Disorder (Adharma), it exists, and can exist only locally, for a time, and in particular parts of the whole. Order however will and, from the nature of things, must ultimately assert itself. And this is the meaning of the saying that Righteousness or Dharma prevails. This is in the nature of things, for Dharma is not a law imposed from without by the Ukase of some Celestial Czar. It is the nature of things; that which constitutes them what they are (Svalakshana-dharanat Dharma). It is the expression of their true being and can only cease to be, when they themselves cease to be. Belief in righteousness is then in something not arbitrarily imposed from without by a Lawgiver, but belief in a Principle of Reason which all men can recognize for themselves if they will. Again Dharma is not only the law of each being but necessarily also of the whole, and expresses the right relations of each part to the whole. This whole is again harmonious, otherwise it would dissolve. The principle which holds it together as one mighty organism is Dharma. The particular Dharma calls for such recognition and action in accordance therewith. Religion, therefore, which etymologically means that which obliges or binds together, is in its most fundamental sense the recognition that the world is an Order, of which each man, being, and thing, is a part, and to which each man stands in a definite, established relation; together with action based on, and consistent with, such recognition, and in harmony with the whole cosmic activity. Whilst therefore the religious man is he who feels that he is bound in varying ways to all being, the irreligious man is he who egoistically

considers everything from the standpoint of his limited self and its interests, without regard for his fellows, or the world at large. The essentially irreligious character of such an attitude is shown by the fact that, if it were adopted by all, it would lead to the negation of Cosmos, that is Chaos. Therefore all Religions are agreed in the essentials of morality and hold that selfishness, in its widest sense, is the root of all sin (Adharma). Morality is thus the true nature of man. The general Dharma (Samanya Dharma) is the universal law governing all, just as the particular Dharma (Vishesha Dharma) varies with, and is peculiar to, each class of being. It follows from what is above stated that disharmony is suffering. This is an obvious fact. Wrong conduct is productive of ill, as right conduct is productive of good. As a man sows, so he will reap. There is an Immanent Justice. But these results, though they may appear at once, do not always do so. The fruit of no action is lost. It must, according to the law of causality, which is a law of reason, bear effect. If its author does not suffer for it here and now in the present life, he will do so in some future one. Birth and death mean the creation and destruction of bodies. The spirits so embodied are infinite in number and eternal. The material universe comes and goes. This in Brahmanism has been said (see Sanatana Vaidika Dharma by Bhagavan Das) to be "the Systole and Diastole of the one Universal Heart, Itself at rest -- the moveless play of Consciousness". The appearance and disappearance of the Universe is the nature or Svabhava of That which it ultimately is. Its immediate cause is Desire, which Buddhism calls Trishna -- or

Thirst, that is desire or thirst for world-enjoyment in the universe of form. Action (Karma) is prompted by desire and breeds again desire. This action may be good (Dharma) or bad (Adharma) leading to enjoyment or suffering. Each embodied soul (Jivatma) will be reborn and reborn into the world until it is freed from all desire. This involves the doctrine of Re-incarnation. These multiple births and deaths in the transmigratory worlds are called Samsara or Wandering. The world is a Dvandva, that is, a composite of happiness and suffering. Happiness of a transitory kind may be had therein by adherence to Dharma in following Kama (desire) and Artha (the means) by which lawful desires may be given effect. These constitute what Brahmanism calls the Trivarga of the PurushArtha, or three aims of sentient being. But just as desire leads to manifestation in form, so desirelessness leads away from it. Those who reach this state seek Moksha or Nirvana (the fourth PurushArtha), which is a state of Bliss beyond the worlds of changing forms. For there is a rest from suffering which Desire (together with a natural tendency to pass its right limits) brings upon men. They must, therefore, either live with desire in harmony with the universal order, or if desireless, they may (for each is master of his future) pass beyond the manifest and become That which is Moksha or Nirvana. Religion, and therefore true civilization, consists in the upholding of Dharma as the individual and general good, and the fostering of spiritual progress, so that, with justice to all beings, true happiness, which is the immediate and ultimate end of all Humanity, and indeed of all being, may be attained.

Anyone who holds these beliefs follows the Bharata Dharma or common principles of all Indic beliefs. Thus as regards God we may either deny His existence (Atheism) or affirm it (Theism) or say we have no sufficient proof one way or another (Agnosticism). It is possible to accept the concept of an eternal Law (Dharma) and its sanctions in a self-governed universe without belief in a personal Lord (Ishwara). So Samkhya, which proceeds on intellectual proof only, does not deny God but holds that the being of a Lord is "not proved".

I am in general agreement with the postulation of Indic Dharma by Sir John Woodruff, although I would balk at the use of words such as Aryan or Brahmanism neither if which is precisely defined . There is generally no need to invent such new words when there are perfectly good words available such as Vedic and the Hindu Dharma .

4. Can you elaborate on the meaning of Dharma

Surely, here is an excellent essay by Dr S .Kalyanaraman

5. Do Hindus pray to God and how do Hindus pray

There is a lot of latitude in the manner in which one prays to ones God [but this is one way](http://indicethos.org)[2]

6. What does a Hindu hope to attain when he prays ?What is meant by PurushArtha ?

PurushArtha or ManushyArtheha is the pursuit of the four kinds of human aspirations, which are dharma, artha, kAma and moksha. The four pursuits in which humans may legitimately engage, also called chaturvarga, "four-fold good" , is a basic principle of Hindu ethics.

- dharma: "Righteous living." The fulfillment of virtue, good works, duties and responsibilities, restraints and observances - performing one's part in the service of society. This includes pursuit of truth under a guru of a particular Parampara and sAmpradaya. Dharma is of four primary forms. It is the steady guide for artha and kAma.

- artha: "Wealth." Material welfare and abundance, money, property, possessions. Artha is the pursuit of wealth, guided by dharma. It includes the basic needs - food, money, clothing and shelter - and extends to the wealth required to maintain a comfortable home, raise a family, fulfill a successful career and perform religious duties. The broadest concept of wealth embraces financial independence, freedom from debt, worthy children, good friends, leisure time, faithful servants, trustworthy employees, and the joys of giving, including tithing (dashamamsha), feeding the poor, supporting religious mendicants, worshiping devoutly, protecting all creatures,

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[2] http://indicethos.org./Hinduism/worship.html

upholding the family and offering hospitality to guests. Artha measures not only riches but quality of life, providing the personal and social security needed to pursue kama, dharma and moksha. It allows for the fulfillment of the householder's five daily sacrifices, pancha mahayajna: to God, ancestors, devas, creatures and men.

- kAma:Emotional needs "Pleasure, love; enjoyment." Earthly love, aesthetic and cultural fulfillment, pleasures of the world (including sexual), the joys of family, intellectual satisfaction. Enjoyment of happiness, security, creativity, usefulness and inspiration.

- moksha: "Liberation." Freedom from rebirth through the ultimate attainment, realization of the Self God, PArasiva. The spiritual attainments and superconscious joys, attending renunciation and yoga leading to Self Realization. Moksha comes through the fulfillment of dharma, artha and kAma (known in Tamil as aram, porul and inbam, and explained by Tiruvalluvar in Tirukural) in the current or past lives, so that one is no longer attached to worldly joys or sorrows. It is the supreme goal of life, called paramartha.

Among these, dharma and the attainment of a DhArmic life style takes precedence and is the gateway to moksha or immortality and eternal bliss. Practice of proper Dharma gives an experience of peace, joy, strength and tranquility within ones-self and life becomes thoroughly disciplined. It is classified as [i] Samanya dharma or the general and Universal Dharma and [ii] Visesha dharma or specific personal dharma. Samanya dharma includes contentment, forgiveness, self-restraint, spiritual knowledge, absence of anger, non-greediness, non-stealing, truthfulness, purity, non-violence, control of senses and desire, discrimination between right and wrong and between real and unreal. Visesha or specific dharma includes duties due to one's birth, age and family and duties to society and family, due to one's career and job and spiritual life. They also include the specific dharmas for the four ashramas and

four varnas. These are the regular duties including the rituals and services to the family, community, ancestors and God that every one is expected to perform. .

7. Who composed the Hindu scriptures and when were they composed

There were many composers of the Veda. It was not unusual for the brother of the King to become the Rishi Chronicler of that reign and compose the relevant Mandala of the Veda. We will compile the names of these composers and make these available in Tabular form.

It is difficult to ascribe an individual to each and every one of the texts, but if there is any one individual that had a major part in writing the later texts it must have been VedaVyaasa or Krishna Dvaipayana. Veda Vyasa (or Baadaarayana) which was also one of his names composed the Mahabharata and the Brahma Sutras. Veda Vyasa was born of the union of a fisherwoman and the sage Parasara. There is as yet no consensus on an accepted date for the composition of the scriptures. If one accepts the end of Kaliyuga as a marker for the Great Bharata War, then the logical date for the chronicling of the Mahabharata war is around 3139 BCE. The Vedas predate the Epics by about 2 millennia.

8. What was the language in which the vast Vedic scriptures (Sruti and Smriti) were composed ?

The language in which they were written was Sanskrit. More specifically the Vedas and many of the earlier texts were written in Vedic Sanskrit before it was codified by Panini. At that time the scripts were not fully developed and the transmission of knowledge was primarily oral. The transition to a likhita Parampara (scriptural tradition) from a srauta Parampara was of course not instantaneous but took several centuries. It took several more centuries for a standardized script to evolve from the proto scripts (Brahmi and Kharosthi)

9. What are the ethical values of the Hindu (see Chapter 2)

10. Why are there so many Gods and Goddesses in the Sanataana Dharma

This is a question that frankly had never occurred to me till I left India and lived in the West and to this day I remain somewhat puzzled as to the reasons why somebody should ask this question in the first place. What difference should it make, i would respond with a touch of asperity. Here is how the sage Yajnavalkya responded to a query in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. We will meet Yajnavalkya later in this Chapter

Then Vidaghdha, son of Shakala, asked him, "How many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

Yajnavalkya, ascertaining the number through a group of mantras known as the Nivid, replied,

"'As many as it says in the invocation of the hymn to the Visvedevas of the gods: three hundred and three, and three thousand and three."

"Very good," said the son of Shakala, "and how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

"Thirty-three."

"Very good, and how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

"Six."

"Very good, and how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

"Three."

"Very good, and how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

"Two."

"Very good, and how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

"One and a half."

"Very good, and how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?"

"One."

There is an excellent discussion of this topic in Arvind Sharma's "An introduction to Classical Hindu Thought", Oxford University Press, 2000 in Chapter 1.In short, a person can choose a deity that suits his mix of guNAs (Rajas, Tamas, and Sattva). Hinduism does not subscribe to a one size fits all theory when it comes to personal worship.

11. How did the name Hindu originate ?

This is a very pertinent question. In the very distant past (about 7 to 8000 years ago) when there were major cities and towns along the river valleys of the Saraswathi and Sindhu Rivers and the Doab surrounded by their tributaries , the people were known either by the regional appellations or by their lineage of the royal house that was ruling the land at that period in history. I have been referring to the people in the aggregate as the Vedics. There were many tribes or clans among the Vedics who went by names such as Bharatas, Panchalas, Yadus, Druhyus, Anus, etc... These tribes or clans were very much like the Scottish clans of much more recent vintage. Many of these clans inhabited an area that came to be known as the Sapta Sindhu area, the Sapta standing for the 7 tributaries of the Indus river at that period in history. Eventually some of these clans moved westward towards the area we know now as Iran. Their dialect was slightly different from those that were left behind. They got into the habit of pronouncing a 's' as an 'h'. Thus Sapta Sindhu eventually came to be known as Hepta Hendu or Hindu for short and the people who inhabited the area came to be known as Hindus. During that era there was no religious connotation for the word Hindu. It was simply a geographic connotation. As the millennia rolled

on, the word Hindu took on a life of its own. The Arabs began referring to the whole peninsula as al-Hind. The Latinized version of this was used by the Greeks (Indikos) and Romans in its present form as India. So also did the Chinese refer to India and its inhabitants as Yindu.

The use of Hindu purely as a reference to those who practiced the Sanaatana Dharma is a relatively recent development fostered by the British in their zeal and obsession to invent distinctions even when the differences were of a secondary nature. Even as late as 1857 the Mughal emperor called himself the Emperor of Hindustan, referring to the Geographical area, rather than as a home for Hindus.

12. When did the Sanaatana Dharma originate and who was the founder of this faith.

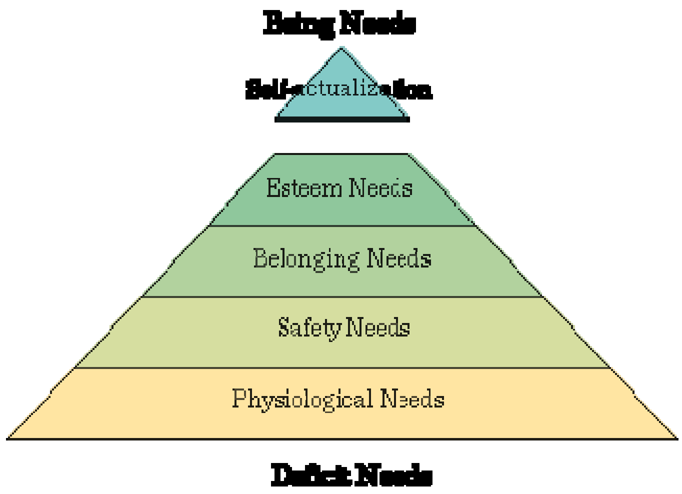
The date when the Dharma was founded is lost in the mists of antiquity, but it can be assumed very safely that by the time the Vedas were written, there was already well established a system of beliefs. Consequently, the origin of the belief system predates the composition of the sacred texts by at least a millennium ,so that we can say that the basic ideas of the Dharma began to coalesce around 6000 BCE.

There was no single founder of the faith, but there were a collection of Rishis and sages who composed the various mandalas of the Rg.

13. Were the people who developed the tenets of the Dharma relatively prosperous in comparison to the poverty stricken conditions prevalent during much of the 20th century

If we invoke the notion of the hierarchy of needs most recently postulated by Abraham Maslow, we can infer that the Vedics must have satisfied most of their basic needs relating to physiological wellbeing and those relating to security before they could begin contemplating their needs for self realization or self actualization as Maslow terms these higher needs

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs.



What are some of the characteristics of a self actualized person according to Maslow;

Truth, rather than dishonesty.

Goodness, rather than evil.

Beauty, not ugliness or vulgarity.

Unity, wholeness, and transcendence of opposites, not

arbitrariness or forced choices.

Aliveness, not deadness or the mechanization of life.

Uniqueness, not bland uniformity.

Perfection and necessity, not sloppiness, inconsistency, or accident.

Completion, rather than incompleteness.

Justice and order, not injustice and lawlessness.

Simplicity, not unnecessary complexity.

Richness, not environmental impoverishment.

Effortlessness, not strain.

Playfulness, not grim, humorless, drudgery.

Self-sufficiency, not dependency.

Meaningfulness, rather than senselessness.

While these qualities are for the most part universally acclaimed as desirable ,there are some that appear to be quintessentially Vedantic, especially those dealing with qualities such as Unity, wholeness, transcendence of opposites, and self sufficiency. There are quite a few who have remarked on the relationship of the Vedantic, in particular the Non dualistic approach, to the transpersonal psychology espoused by Maslow.

We will have more to say on the congruence between Non-dualist conceptions and the Maslow taxonomy of hierarchical needs.

14. What is meant by the Smarta tradition and who are the Smartas ? What is the origin of the name ? What are the beliefs of the Smartas ? How distinct are they and what are the distinctions

see for instance the Wiki encyclopedia

some excerpts

"The Smarta tradition is a denomination of the Hindu religion. This term is usually used to denote a certain category of Brahmanas. Smartas consider the Vedas supreme. The majority of members of Smarta community are followers of Advaita. In practicality, Smarta and Advaita have become almost synonymous because of the prevalence of Advaita philosophy among Smarta Brahmanas. But not all believers in Advaita are Smartas. In ancient times, all Brahmanas who specialized in the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, and who followed the Vedas and Sastras (both Smriti and Shruti) came to be known as Smartas. They therefore should not be confused with followers of Advaita philosophy who may not or need not come from this family tradition." In reality substantial percentage of Smartas no longer

practice the profession of Brahmana for a living and have migrated to other professions such as Engineering, Law, teaching, research, academics, and Medicine. They are doing reasonably well despite draconian laws of reverse discrimination directed specially against Brahmanas. Many have migrated to other countries

Definition of Smartha

In Sanskrit *smarta* has several meanings including *one who remembers*, *a teacher*, and *smārta* means "relating to memory, recorded in or based on the *smrti*, based on tradition, prescribed or sanctioned by traditional law or usage, (etc)", from the root *smr* ("remember").

Distinction from others

The Smartas consider themselves followers and propagators of *Smriti* or religious texts derived from Vedic scriptures. It is from this that the name is derived. This term is used with respect to a certain specialized category of Brahmanas. Not all Brahmanas specialized in this Smriti tradition. Some were influenced by Buddhism, Jainism or Charvaka tradition and philosophy. This did not mean that all these people rejected the authority of Vedas, but only that their tradition of worship and philosophy was based not on smriti texts. In time, Shankaracharya brought all the Vedic communities together. He tried to remove the non-smriti aspects that had crept into the Hindu communities. He also endeavored to unite them by arguing that any of the different Hindu gods could be worshipped, according to the prescriptions given in the smriti texts. He established that worship of various deities are compatible with

Vedas and is not contradictory, since all are different manifestations of one nirguna Brahman. Shankaracharya was instrumental in reviving interest in the smritis, and the entire Vedic community rallied around him and are known as Smartas. Also, his philosophy of Advaita was also followed by all the Smartas. And even those Smartas who did not follow the Advaita philosophy considered Shankaracharya as a guiding light for reviving the smriti texts and tradition.

Thus, a bedrock of Smartas who also follow Advaita philosophy, is their belief in the essential sameness of all deities, the unity of Godhead, and their conceptualization of the myriad deities of India as various manifestations of the one divine power. Smartas accept and worship the six manifestations of God, (Ganesha, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, Surya and Skanda) and the choice of the nature of God is up to the individual worshipper since different manifestations of God are held to be equivalent. Thus, it is false to say that Hinduism has 330 million gods, which are more correctly devas or celestial beings; even the liberal Smarta denomination only considers six forms of God to be objects of worship and consider it to be derived from one nirguna Brahman; where as other denominations of Hinduism, such as Vaishnavism and Shaivism follows worship of a single manifestation of God, but both are ultimately monotheistic."

It is our view that a taxonomy based on mono/polytheism is not suitable for the Dharma where the multiplicity of the deities is not central to the belief or value system and the choice of deity by and large is left to the individual so as to act as a suitable symbol for his daily worship. This is a source of much misunderstanding and bewilderment for the west which refuses to recognize the multiple identities of a person and insists on a one size fits all taxonomy and as a consequence insists on pigeon holing a person as a mono or polytheist and then having done so insists that he or she is a child of a lesser God (or worse).

15. Does Hinduism expect or demand exclusive allegiance as some faiths do and does it take the approach of, 'unless you believe in Me you are damned to perdition'

No. The Dharma does not take an exclusivist 'one size fits all' approach. The Dharma recognized the immense diversity in the human species and that different paths to self realization are appropriate depending on the many factors surrounding the individual human being. There are many potential paths that are prescribed, including Naastik belief systems , which do not recognize the primacy of the Vedas and their central place as the 'Sruti'.

The emphasis in the Dharma is on one's behavior and one's actions. There is implicit in the teaching of the Dharma , the belief that certain behaviors and actions are more efficacious in attaining one's Moksha and that others are harmful to the realization of the true Self, but it does not ask the aspirant to abandon his/her set of beliefs and start with a clean slate. There is definitely no DhArmic sanction to say for instance, you are the child of a lesser God ,merely because you do not call yourself a Hindu, a belief that is very explicit in some other faiths. This is a major distinction between Hinduism and the other great religions of the world.. Hinduism is not merely tolerant of other faiths, but it embraces the diversity inherent in the many ideologies inherent in a civilization.

It is probably true to say that throughout the ages it has been the most accepting of all major faiths, so much so that competing ideologies like Communism have sought to portray this as a weakness of the Hindu and have sought to take undue advantage of it. It is however a grave mistake to assume that this is a sign of docility on the part of the Hindu. History indicates otherwise. For instance, the Sassanian Persian empire succumbed within a period of two years to the onslaught of the followers of Mohammad, whereas it took them 500 years to reach the gates of Delhi. The Indic civilization remains the only extant civilization in the modern world, to survive from an ancient era, and it has done so in the face of incredible odds. Today, the tradition is under siege from a wide array of formidable adversaries of whom the most formidable are the children and descendants of our fellow Hindu brothers and sisters. If you accept what i have said so far , I would entreat you my fellow Hindus never to denigrate your tradition publicly (or even privately for that matter). That in fact is what most adherents of other faiths are already doing and it remains merely a matter of emulating a sound strategy.

16. You say sutras are aphorisms and were used in the interest of brevity. can you elaborate

Posted by Poster Sunder in India-Forum.com

The Ability to conceive and keep up with a technique of documentation called

Sutras is surely a technological and linguistic marvel of high order. Sutras are compilation of major works where very few words are used. (If it's not readily interpreted without proper background needed for the subject, Sutras may seem confusing.) Some of the Famous sutras are

(*) Yoga Sutra - Patanjali.

(*) Brahma Sutra - Baadaarayana.

(*) Bhakti Sutra - Naradha.

(*) Kama Sutra - Vatsyayana.

(*) Neethi Sutras - Chanakya.

Here is the definition of a Sutra.

alpaaksharam asandigdham saaravath vishvatho mukham,
asathobham anavadhyam cha sutram sutravidho viduh.

Those who know the definition of a sutra define it as possessing the following qualities..

Alpa aksharam = With bare minimum (use of) alphabets.

Asannigdham = Free from doubts and ambiguities; clear and accurate.

Saravad = like the essence; devoid of unnecessary pulp.

Viswatho mukham = Universal; applicable anywhere and everywhere. [Not limited by time, space, cultures etc.]

Asathobham = Shining, Illuminating, highlighting the point at hand, never diminishing in radiance/value.

Anavadyam = Without any bugs, errors, mistakes or shortcomings; perfect.

17. What is the situation regarding the Caste system in Hindu society ? Was such a system endorsed by the ancient Vedics in any of the scriptures. Did the Hindu scriptures endorse Untouchability ?

Because of the social stratifications resulting from 800 years of alien domination, this needs an answer along with its historical context. Please refer to the section on Caste for a complete discussion on Caste

18. What are the central core tenets of the Sanatana Dharma ? If you had to pick the most important 5 among them which ones would you pick

Central Core Beliefs of Sanatana Dharma

Belief in a Supreme Brahman and the relationship between the Atman and the Brahman (the essential divinity of the human spirit)

Freedom to choose an Ishta Devata(personal Deity) realizing such freedom could result in different choices of deities

Belief in Free Will and its relationship to Karma(personal responsibility and accountability)

Freedom to pursue PurushArtha or Chaturvarga (the four goals of life dharma, artha, kama and moksha) on the path to Self Realization

Freeedom to choose the appropriate path (Karma Yoga, Jnana Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga) or combination thereof toachieve Self Fulfillment depending on onesVasanas

Observe the ethical responsibilities enjoined by the Dharma (Ethics, integrity and building of character)

19. Do Hindus have a Chief among all Swamis, like a Pope, sort of a Parama Rishi if you will ?

No. The Dharma does not believe in interposing another entity between the Atman and the ParamAtman, another individual however learned though he may be. The Guru points the path, lights the way, and may even suggest the appropriate goals, but no other person can dictate these to any individual. The Freedom to choose is the single most important characteristic of the Hindu faith. Hinduism does not believe in a one size fits all doctrine, and does not demand a uniformity in worship,

a catechism. There are thousands of appropriate slokas to choose from or if one so desires one can write ones own sloka. It is recommended however that there be a disciplinary approach and that a certain time be set aside for meditation and prayer, preferably at the same time and place everyday, and that the same prayer be chanted until it can be repeated by rote. This is where a Guru's guidance is highly recommended. One cannot become a Doctor before writing the board exams. Remember ,the Dharma reminds us all we are potentially divine and it is our own Avidya that creates a veil and blurs the vision of where we ought to go.

The absence of a real or even a titular head of the Hindu faith has had unintended consequences. One of these is the fact that rival theologies, have assumed that the absenceof a head implies vulnerability and weakness and that they can be especially aggressive when it comes to the Dharma. As a consequence they feel they can make any kind of unsubstantiated allegation and get away with it , since there is nobody of sufficient stature to rebut such statements, which they would not make even against another faith like islam , that also has no titular head. However, the Mullah in Islam has greater authority and the organizational structure of Islam is far more hierarchical than that of the Hindu faith, which has hardly any organizational structure to speak of.

But the same adversaries do not realize that once unleashed the democratic power of almost 1 Billion adherents is formidableand is growing in strength as more and

more Hindus realize the nature and extent of the egregious allegations that are being leveled against their faith. The window of opportunity to send the Hindu Dharma into Museums and make it a historical curiosity has now closed

20. We have all heard of the great philosopher statesman of India ,and in modern times we have had such statesmen as Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Can you name one such person from the ancient times?

The most famous of the philosopher statesman of India was by far Chanakya. But there is one who was less well known especially amongst western audiences and he is Bhartrihari. In an era when Indics with versatile interests were relatively abundant, Bhartrihari stands out as a genius of great versatility. Linguist, philosopher, king, this man did it all .we will put together a collage of Bhartrihari who was a contemporary of Varahamihira . in the meantime here is a snapshot of his life and times

21. What are the methods of acquiring knowledge (pramAna) in the various Dhaarmic faiths

I. JAINISM: 3 pramANas

1. pratyaksha (perception)

2. anumAna (inference)

3. JinashAsana (Teachings of the 24 TIrthankaras)

II. BUDDHISM: 3 pramANas

1. pratyaksha

2. anumAna

3. Buddhavacana (Teachings of the Buddha) (shruti)

III. NYAAYA-VAISHESHHIKA: 4 pramANas

1. pratyaksha

2. anumAna

3. upamAna (analogy)

4. shabda (testimony--sacred [shruti and smRti] & secular)

*** Perception, called PratyakŞha, occupies the foremost position in the Nyaya epistemology. Perception is defined by sense-object contact and is unerring. Perception can be of two types:**

o Ordinary (Laukika or Sadharana), of six types, viz., visual-by eyes, olfactory-by nose, auditory-by ears, tactile-by skin, gustatory-by tongue and mental-by mind.

o Extra-ordinary (Alaukika or Asadharana), of three types, viz., Samanyalakshana

(perceiving generality from a particular object), Jñanalakshana (when one sense organ can also perceive qualities not attributable to it, as when seeing a chili, one knows that it would be bitter or hot), and Yogaja (when certain human beings, from the power of Yoga, can perceive past, present and future and have supernatural abilities, either complete or some). Also, there are two modes or steps in perception, viz., Nirvikalpa, when one just perceives an object without being able to know its features, and Savikalpa, when one is able to clearly know an object. All laukika and alaukika pratyakshas are savikalpa. There is yet another stage called Pratyabhijñā, when one is able to re-recognise something on the basis of memory.

* Inference, called AnumAna, is one of the most important contributions of Nyaya. It can be of two types - inference for oneself (Svarthanumana, where one does not need any formal procedure, and at the most the last three of their 5 steps), and inference for others (Parathanumana, which requires a systematic methodology of 5 steps). Inference can also be classified into 3 types: Purvavat (infering an unperceived effect from a perceived cause), Sheshavat (infering an unperceived cause from a perceived effect) and Samanyatodrishta (when inference is not based on causation but on uniformity of co-existence). A detailed anaysis of error is also given, explaining when anumAna could be false.

* Comparison or Analogy, which is the rough translation of Upamana. It is the

knowledge of the relationship between a word and the object denoted by the word. It is produced by the knowledge of resemblance or similarity, given some pre-description of the new object beforehand.

*** Word, or Shabda are also accepted as a pramana. It can be of two types, Vaidika (Vedic), which are the words of the four sacred Vedas, and are described as the Word of God, having been composed by God, and Laukika, or words and writings of trustworthy human beings.**

IV. SANKHYA-YOGA: 3 pramANas

1. pratyaksha

2. anumAna

3. shabda (shruti)

V. PRABHAKARA MIIMAMSA: 5 pramANas

1. pratyaksha

2. anumAna

3. upamAna

4. arthApatti (implication)

5. shabda (shruti)

VI. KUMARILA MIIMAMSA: 6 pramANas

1. pratyaksha
2. anumAna
3. upamAna
4. arthApatti
5. shabda (shruti)
6. anupalabdhi (non-apprehension)

VII. SANKARA (ADVAITA) VEDANTA: 6 pramANas

(same as the 6 of KumArila MImAmsA). "vyAvahAre bhATTanayaH".

VIII. RAMANUJAM (VISHISHT ADVAITA) VEDANTA: 3 pramANas

1. pratyaksha
2. anumAna
3. shabda (shruti)

IX. MADHAVA (DVAITA) VEDANTA: 3 pramANas

1. pratyaksha
2. anumAna
3. shabda (shruti)

Thus there is an underlying congruence among all the Indic belief systems at least as far as the acquisition of knowledge goes, which is why i use the term Indic ethos to indicate a homogeneity among all faiths originating in the Indian subcontinent. We will have more to say on the various approaches to knowledge acquisition a little later. This is not to say that there are not significant differences, but the fundamental postulates that they make about the universe are not dissimilar

22. What is Vairagya ? What role does it play in Hindu ethics

Are Brahmanas the Dalits of today ? **Read for yourself and make up your own mind**

23. What if any are the obligatory duties of the Hindu ?

What is meant by Samskaaras ? Are Samskaaras the only obligatory duties ? And if so, isn't there too much emphasis on ritual and less on helping those in need .

Hindu samskaras are like other daily practices of the Hindus , of great antiquity. An excellent discussion of the origin, meaning and significance of the Samskaras is given by Rajbali Pandey in a monograph titled' Hindu Samskaaras", published by Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, Delhi. What follows is a synopsis of some of the essential ideas which are treated in much greater detail in the book.

The word Samskara has uncertain etymology, as far as we are aware, and there does not exist an exact English equivalent. The word ceremony or Latin caeremonia does not convey an exact sense of the word. It s in fact related to the word Karma in Sanskrit. Samskaara does not mean "mere outward religious rite ,polite observances, empty form, stately usage, formal qualities and punctilious behavior" which is the meaning of the word ceremony in the oxford dictionary, and as it is falsely understood in many circles. A more closer rendering of the word SamskAram is contained in the word sacrament "religious ceremony or act regarded as outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual grace" applied by the Eastern, pre-reformation Western and Roman Catholic church to the seven rites of baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist , penance, extreme unction , orders and matrimony.

A Samskaara is that which refines and purifies the performer. There are 52 Samskaaras meant to uplift the Jivaatma to the Paramaatma, out of which some rishis have recommended 10. These are prescribed by the Smritis, based on Vedas. For the purification of mind, these karmas have to be performed sincerely. The purified mind can then undertake Atma Vichaaram to attain Moksha.

Sl. No	Name	Details
01	Vivaaha (Marriage)	**Entry into the Grihastha the second of the asramas of life (Brahmachari, Grihastha, Vaanavasi and Sannyasa)**
02	**Garbhaa Dhaanam**	**Physical union is consecrated through prayer. This is done prior to the 'Shaanti Muhurtam'.**
03	**Pumsavanam**	**Done during the 3rd month of pregnancy. This is also called "Garbharakshan". Garbharakshana is performed to assure that the infant is not miscarried.**
04	**Seemantham**	**Done during the 6th or 8th month. This rite is primarily social and festival in nature, intended to keep the pregnant woman in good spirits.**
05	**Jaata Karmam**	**Done just after birth.. Gifts are offered to people.**
06	**Naama Karanam**	**Naming ceremony on the 11th day**
07	**Anna Praasanam**	**First feeding of solid food during 6th month**
08	**Chaulam (Kudumi)**	**Special hair-dressing done along with Mantras**

	Chudakarma	
09	Upanayanam (Poonal)	Starting of Brahmacharya. This ceremony initiates the child into an intellectual and spiritual journey. 'Yagyopaveet' (sacred thread) indicates that the child is qualified to perform all the traditional Vedic rites including Pitra Kriya and Tarpan for his forefathers.
10	Samavartam	conclusion of Brahmachari period
11	Antyesti,shraddha	funeral rites to be performed by the son

Sl. Nos. 01 to 09 are to be done by the parents. The parents should see that their children do not blame them later for not doing these Samskaaras.

Sl. Nos. 10 is to be done by the Brahmacharies during Gurukulavaasam. This duration is about 12 years.

A final word about samskaras; as with everything else about Hinduism, it is up to the individual to decide whether a particular Samskaara has relevance. It is easy to dismiss them as being of no relevance to the age we live in, but if after reading , research and contemplation (sravanam, mananam, nididhyasanam) such is the conclusion, It is understandable one follows ones dictates on the choice of which Samskaara to follow.

Chapter 2

The Ethical Values of the Dharma

The ethical value system and the Goals of the Hindu

The Vedantic Paradigm

Brahmavidya and Yogasastra

2.1 The Goal and the means to get there

It is the goal of every Hindu to attain Self Realization and Salvation (Moksha). Vedanta (literally the end of the Veda), the essence of the Sanatana Dharma is concerned essentially with 2 aspects of higher human knowledge

Metaphysics	**Brahmavidya or PAraVidya or higher knowledge**
Ethics and Discipline	**Yoga Sastra or the means to attain Brahmavidya**

2.2 The Indic tradition is a srautic tradition

The foundations and origins of this Meta knowledge are lost in antiquity and are considered eternal and do not depend on any one prophet or Sage. A distinction is made by the Indic between Sruti; a revelation, from the Supreme Spirit or Brahman nascent in all life, that is transmitted to us through the Rishis (from rsh to know) and Smrti that which is heard (from man). Thus the Indic tradition was not a likhita Parampara (written tradition) but an oral one, at least for several millennia until the Vedas were codified by Veda VyAsa around 3100 BCE, by which time the Brahmi script was in vogue. Veda, Mantra and Sruti are thus termed Apaurusheya Pramaanam.

They are the first record we humans have of the questions that were asked in antiquity, questions we continue to ask today. Questions like – Who am I, why am I here, what makes me unique as a species and as an individual, how was the Universe created and what is my place in it .

But as far as we are aware it was Vyaasa (BAdArayAna, Krishna DvaipArayana) who expounded on this knowledge in a tangible form to humans in the form of Brahma Sutras. Sutras are aphorisms characterized primarily their terseness and the depth of meaning associated with each aphorism. Brevity was essential, as the primary means of transmittal of knowledge was oral and vast amounts of knowledge had to be memorized and had to be recited in a particular meter (Chandas) to assist in harmonizing the mind while engaged in the process of learning.

Thus all Indic tradition can be classified into the following

Veda	**The primordial sacred books of the Indic Vedic tradition**
Sutra	**Aphorisms**
Smrti	**That which is remembered**
Purana	**Literally the story of the ancients**
Itihasa	**The story of the past or History**
Bhashyam	**Commentaries**

2.3 GuNAs

Sattva	**Individuals who are predominantly Sattvic are attached to happiness and to knowledge**
Rajas	**Rajasic individuals are filled with a desire and passion to undertake new projects and goad others into action. Many leaders exhibit a Rajasic temperament**
Tamas	**Tamas is inertia born of ignorance. It enshrouds the discrimination of man and inclines him to indolence, sleep and renders him inert. By nature it is destructive**

Every individual exhibits three GuNAs in varying proportions. Chapter 14 of the Bhagavad Gita deals with their function, and indicates the means for the individual to transcend them. The path that an individual needs to take is dependent on the relative proportion of these GuNAs that reside in him. The 3 GuNAs are, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. The relative proportion of each in the total determines the essential nature of the individual. It follows that at any given time an individual, may exhibit different modes of behavior as his personality matures and develops. The son of a Brahmana may choose not to follow the priestly vocation and may elect to go into law. As a general rule of thumb one elects to be in a profession which utilizes his GuNAs fully. For example Brahmanas tend to cluster around intellectual pursuits (teaching, legal, corporate management, administration etc. In the past the choice of professions available to Brahmanas were limited to priestly duties and the services he could render as a Minister to the Maharaja including mundane tasks such as accounting and cooking. In recent years substantial numbers of Brahmanas faced with increasing discrimination from their own government have elected to go into Business, so that his varna is that of a Vaisya, unless he maintains his competency and knowledge of the Vedic scripture and adheres to the injunctions of a Brahmana. Most Indian philosophers accept this view originally propounded in the Samkhya philosophy, that the whole of nature is composed of 3 forces or GuNAs as above.

2.4 The cardinal Virtues according to Hinduism

Purity	**Sattva, Suddhi**
Self Control	**Sama/Dama**
Detachment	**Vairagya**
Truth	**Satyam**
Non Violence	**Ahimsa**

One of the first steps is to master the eight characteristics or Atma guNAs

Compassion	**Daya**
Forgiveness or patience	**shanty**
Absence of jealousy	**nausea**
Cleanliness	**shaucham**
Not feeling mental strain or doing work with effortless ease	**anabas**
Auspiciousness	**man gala**
Non-miserliness	**akarpanya**
Non-grasping or non-desiring nature	**asprha**

2.5 Paths to Self Realization

There are many paths to Self realization, but many of these paths can be categorized into four main Yogas or means to attain the goal. They are

Karma Yoga	**Work and Action, subject of Chapter 3 of the Bhagavad Gita**
Bhakti Yoga	**Yoga of Devotion, Chapter 12 of Bhagavad Gita**
Jnana Yoga	**Yoga of Knowledge, yoga of pure discrimination, Chapter 4 of Bhagavad Gita, summarized in Chapter 2**
Raja Yoga	**Yoga of meditation, summarized in Chapter 6 of Bhagavad Gita**

For most individuals a balanced combination of all four Yogas is most appropriate, the proper balance depending on the individual's vasanas or svabhava and the stage of his journey through life. There is no intent to convey that any particular Yoga is superior to the other.

For an introduction to Patanjali's Yoga Sutras see for instance "Practical Yoga , ancient and modern" by Earnest E Wood or Raja Yoga by Swami Vivekananda

Yoga is the control of ideas in the Mind. Yoga means the establishment of perfect harmony between the everyday self and its spiritual source.

Five Kinds of ideas or modifications (Patanjali's Yoga Sutras)

Right Knowledge

Wrong Knowledge or indiscrimination

Fancy or verbal delusion

Sleep

Memory

Special qualifications demanded of a student of Vedanta (Sadhana Chatusthaya) or the fourfold pre-requisites of philosophical discipline (Mandukya Upanishad). See also Viveka Chudamani by Adi Sankara

English	Samskrtam	
Discrimination (between the Real and the Unreal)	Viveka	
Non-attachment	Vairagya – dispassion for all enjoyments here and in hereafter , uncolored ness	
Self Control	Sama(tranquility of mind), Dama(restraint of senses), Uparathi(renunciation of desires), thithiksha(endurance), sraddha,(faith) samadhan (self control)	Uparathi – renunciation of superstition and dependence on the idea that his/her advance can be helped or impeded by others (Vivekachudamani) Thithiksha – endurance – acceptance of the idea that he/she must endure what comes and make the most of it without complaining (whining in modern parlance) - forbearance
Irrepressible hankering for the truth	Mumukshutwa a burning desire to realize the Self within, which is the Self within us all	

Efficacy of Chanting Shanti 3 times – The purpose is removal of 3 possible obstacles to the study of scriptures

Adhi-daivika – God sent like lightning , thunder etc.

Adhi-Bauthhika – phenomenon such as fire, floods, landslides etc.

Adhi-atmika or Adhyatmika – purely subjective and self inflicted, such as inertia, lack of faith, insincerity, and such arise from our own negative attitudes

The Eight Angas (limbs) of Yoga

Yama	**Discipline, ahimsa (abstinence from doing injury), Satyam (truthfulness) ,Asteya(honesty), Brahmacharya(celibacy during the first 25 years, chastity), Apar Graha (non acquisitiveness,poverty)**
Niyama	**Self restraint, shaucha (cleanliness, purity), santosh (contentment), Tapas (ascetism), Swadhyaya (study), ishwarpranidhana(devotion to God)**
Asanam	**Sitting in the right place and with the correct bodily attitude**
Pranayama	**Regulation of breath**
Pratyahara	**suppression**
Dharana	**concentration**
Dhyanam	**meditation**
Samadhi	**absorption**

2.6 A person's karma can be classified as follows

PrArabda karma	**That part of a Man's accumulated karma which has begun to bear fruit in the present life. It is entirely predetermined and cannot be avoided, e,g, sex, parentage, color of skin. Man is a creature of circumstance**
Sanchita karma	**Accumulated karma of previous actions/habits of individual. As a result of past actions he acquires a certain character and certain tendencies. Unlike prarabda karma it can be totally destroyed and it is possible to uproot evil habits by persistence and plant good habits in their place**
Agami karma	**Is the Karma which is being created now. It's fruits will come to us possibly in a future life. It is entirely in our own hands**

Discussion of Cognate Ideas

Exercise of Free Will – see for instance the dialog between a disciple and His Holiness Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swaminah, reproduced elsewhere in this monograph

The four proximate Goals of life or Purushartha

Dharma	**See for instance here,duties,responsibilities to family,society,spiritual preceptors and the nation**
Artha	**Acquisition of wealth and satisfaction of material needs (vide Maslow hierarchy)**
Kama	**Satisfaction of emotional and sensory needs, music, art, sex, etc.**
Moksha or PurushArtha	**Realization of the self, the goal of all human endeavors**

2.7 Sreyas and Preyas (The Path of the good and the Path of the pleasant)

Every individual is faced with a choice. The choice is usually between the path of least resistance (or the path of the pleasant) and the path involving a degree of difficulty, a path involving either sustained effort or an intellectually demanding one. The tendency is to choose the path that is well trodden, safe, and less risky and involves less effort or some combination of some of these. Even Arjuna the Knight Templar of the Mahabharata is not above the desire to cut corners and choose the easy path. One is reminded of the poem by Robert Frost, The Road not taken

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

In the 2nd chapter (2.7) Arjuna said to Bhagavan

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभावः

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेताः ,

यच्छ्रेयः स्यान्निश्चितं ब्रूहि तन्मे

शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ,, 7 ,,

Transliteration

kArpanya dosaphahata svabhAvaha

prcchami tvAm dharmasamudha chethAha I

ysc chreyah syAnnischitam brUhi tanme,

shishyas te ham sAdhimam tvAm prapannam II

कार्पण्य दोष उपहतस्वभावः - कायरतारूप दोष से आच्छादित स्वभ

ाववाला - with my being overtaken by weakness

पृच्छामि - पूछता हूं - I ask

त्वाम् - आपको - you

धर्मसंमूढचेताः - धर्म के विषय मे मोहितचित्त हुआ - with a mind in confusion about duty

यत् - जो - which

श्रेयः - अच्छा - good

स्यात् - हो - may be

निश्चितम् - निश्चय किया हुआ - decisively

ब्रूहि - कहिये - tell me

तत् - वह - that

मे - मेरे लिए - for me

शिष्यः - शिष्य हूं - disciple

ते - आपका - your

अहम् - मैं - I

शाधि - शिक्षा दीजिये - teach

माम् - मुझे - me

त्वाम् - आपके - in you

प्रपन्नम् - शरण हुए - taken refuge

कायरतारूप दोष से आच्छादित स्वभाववाला और धर्म के विषय में मोहितचित्त हुआ मैं आपको पूछता हूं जो कुछ निश्चय किया हुआ कल्याणकारक साधन हो वह मुझसे कहिए क्योंकि मैं आपका शिष्य हूं इसलिए आपके शरण हुए मुझे शिक्षा दीजिये ,

With my very being overtaken by weakness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, tell me that which is decidedly good; I am your disciple. Pray instruct me, I place myself in your hands. (7)

"My nature is weighed down with the taint of feeblemindedness; my understanding is confused as to right duty. i entreat you, say definitely what is good for me.
i am your desciple. do instruct me who have taken refuge in you."

Arjuna confesses that this crisis has driven him to the position of a 'kripana'. the upanishad says that he who does not strive for spiritual enlightenment is a 'kripana'.

"anyacchreyo 'nyadutaiva preyaste ubhe nanarthe purusam sinitah
tayoh zreya adadanasya sadhur bhavati hiyate 'rthad ya u preyo vrnite"

"one thing is the good and quite another, the pleasant; being of different requisitions, they both bind man. holy becomes he who pursues the good, but falls the man from the goal, who chooses the pleasant."

Kathopanishad, II-1

Arjuna finds himself now at the cross-roads between the pleasant and good, between Sreyas and Preyas. he who was all along the kinsman and comrade of sri krishna, now becomes a disciple and supplicates for the gift of 'sreyas'- the good. He surrenders himself to the lord. this frame of mind is prerequisite to the attainment of spiritual enlightenment. He who seeks to make a sacred study of the bhagavad gita will do well to chant this verse every time and to evoke in himself the attitude of self-surrender seen here in arjuna. it is a prayer complete in itself.

Bhagavan said to Arjuna:

"karmaNyevAdhikAraste mA phaleSu kadAcana
mA karma phalahetur bhUr mA te saGgo 'stvakarmaNi"

"yogasthaH kuru karmANi saGgam tyaktvA dhanaJjaya
siddhy asiddhyoH samo bhUtvA samatvaM yoga ucyate"

(Gita 2.47, 48)

"seek to perform your duty. but lay not claim to its fruits. be you not the producer of the fruits of karma; neither shall you lean towards inaction."

These are the famous verses in the Gita embodying the concept of Desireless Action. One is hard pressed to act without any motive. Most are busy either to gain something or to ward off something unwanted. in the absence of such a motive generally there is little action.

But Bhagavan induces Arjuna not to be motivated and at the same time to be intensely active. Yes, here in lies the turning point in life from 'Preyas to Sreyas'.
good accrues from detachment and never from attachment.

Karma (action) in itself is no evil; but it becomes so when mixed up with desire. desire tainted karma gives continuity to the wheel of birth and death. Conquerors of desire are they who care not for the fruits of karma. Freedom from desire is real freedom.

When duty is discharged untarnished by desire, clarity of understanding ensues. karma therefore has to be performed perfectly by the aspirant unmindful of the fruits thereof.

"a boat may be floating on the water, but no water should be allowed to get into it. man may live in the world, but no worldly desire ought to take possession of him.

- Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa"

how the desireless one works and lives in the world is explained in the next verse:

"perform action, o Dhananjaya, being fixed in yoga, renouncing attachments, and even-minded in success and failure; equilibrium is verily yoga."
The surrendered yogi, the Bhakta holds all the activities taking place in him as the doings of lord. he places himself in the position of a willing servant, ever ready to execute orders.
An attitude of this kind eliminates attachment. The devoted yogi holds the successes and failures in his endeavors free from attachment and aversion.
this even-mindedness is equilibrium. he is a yogi who keeps the mind in this poised

state under all circumstances. Spiritual growth is possible to him only who keeps the mind ever poised.

Be in the world even as a housekeeper in a rich man's house.
for all intents and purposes she claims her master's children and property as her own. but at the core of her heart she knows that they do not belong to her and she remains firm in that attitude.

seemingly own worldly things.
but have no attachment to them.
as the housekeeper can with ease relinquish her assumed ownership of the employer's property, be prepared for separation from earthly possession."

-Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa "

"Buddhi yukto jahatii ha ubhe sukrta duskrte
tasmad yogaya yujyasva yogah karmasu kaushalam"

(Gita 2.50)

"the one fixed in equanimity of mind frees oneself in this life from vice and virtue alike; therefore devote yourself through this yoga; the yoga of equanimity is skill in action."

Karma is classified as good or bad based on the results it produces. Good karma is as much the cause as the bad one, for continuity of the wheel of birth and death. but the karma-yogi is not affected by karma of any kind. This is due to his focus on equanimity - the state free from likes and dislikes, attachment and aversion. Detached performance of duty adds efficiency and the required equilibrium is maintained perfectly.

Bhishma fought for the ‘less virtuous’ side to the best of his ability, but because of his

complete detachment he was not tainted by his action.

Equanimity of mind comes to one, free from likes and dislikes, attachment and aversion. He is a devoted yogi of skillful action (yogah karmasu kaushalam) . No new karma accrues to him. the momentum of the old karma wanes away. He gains in perfecting the mind.

2.8 Acts versus Knowledge

Pravritti-Nivritti

The religion of) Pravritti Dharma and Nivritti Dharma

"In this world there is a two fold path; the path of knowledge of the Sankhyam and the path of action of the Yogis."
--The Bhagavad Gita, Ch 3, Verse 3

"The Vedic dharma (religion) is verily twofold, characterized by Pravritti (social action) and Nivritti (inward contemplation), designed to promote order in the world; this twofold dharma has in view the true social welfare and spiritual emancipation of all beings."
-Sri Sankaracharaya (A.D. 788-820)
One of the greatest philosophers of India.

From The Bhagavad Gita
Chapter 18, Verses 5, 6, 7 & 11

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be abandoned, but should be performed ; sacrifice, gift and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise.
[Note: There are three types of Sacrifice, gift and austerity;
Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic.]

But even these actions should be performed leaving aside attachment and the desire for rewards.

Verily the renunciation of obligatory action (acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity) is not proper ; the abandonment of the same from delusion is declared to be Tamasic.

Verily, it is not possible for an embodied being to abandon actions entirely ; but he who relinquishes the rewards of actions is verily called a man of renunciation.

From the Mahabharata
Santi Parva, Section CCXLI
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

Addressing his father, Suka said:
The declarations of the Vedas are twofold. They once lay down the command, "Do all acts." They also indicate the reverse saying, "Give up acts." Where do persons go by the aid of Knowledge and where by the aid of Acts? Indeed, these declarations about knowledge and acts are dissimilar and even contradictory. I desire to hear this. Do tell me this.

Vyasa said: I shall expound to thee the two paths, viz., the destructible and the indestructible, depending respectively upon acts and knowledge. Listen with concentrated attention, O child, to me, as I tell thee the place that is reached by one with the aid of knowledge, and that other place which is reached with the aid of acts. The difference between these two places, is as great as the limitless sky. These are the two paths upon which the Vedas are established; the duties indicated by Pravritti, and those based on Nivritti.

Pravritti
By acts, a living creature is destroyed. By knowledge, however, he becomes emancipated. For this reason, Yogis who behold the other side of the ocean of life never betake themselves to acts. Through acts one is forced to take rebirth, after death, with a body composed of the six and ten ingredients.

Nivritti
Through knowledge, however, one becomes transformed into that which is Eternal, Unman fest, and Immutable.

One class of persons that are however of little intelligence, applaud acts. In consequence of this they have to assume bodies (one after another) ceaselessly. Those men whose perceptions are keen in respect of duties and who have attained to that high understanding (which leads to knowledge), never applaud acts even as persons that depend for their drinking water upon the supply of streams never applaud wells and water tanks.

The fruit that one obtains of acts consists of pleasure and pain, of existence and non-existence. By knowledge, one attains to that where there is no occasion for grief; where one becomes freed from both birth and death; where one is not subject to decrepitude; where one transcends the state of conscious existence. By knowledge, one attains to Brahman, which is Supreme, Unman fest, immutable, ever-existent, imperceptible, above the reach of pain, immortal, and transcending destruction; where all become freed from the influence of all pairs of opposites (like pleasure and pain, heat and cold, insults and compliments, happiness and unhappiness etc., where all become freed also of wish or purpose.

Reaching that stage, they cast equal eyes on everything, become universal friends and devoted to the good of all creatures. There is a wide gulf, O son, between one devoted to knowledge and one devoted to acts. Know that the man of knowledge, without undergoing destruction, remains existent forever like the moon on the last day of the dark fortnight existing in a subtle (but undestroyed) form.

As regards the man devoted to acts, his nature may be inferred from beholding the newborn moon, which appears like a bent thread in the firmament (subject to growth and decay). That person of acts takes rebirth with a body with eleven entities for its ingredients, that are the results of modification, and with a subtle form that represents a total of six and ten. The deity who takes refuge in that (material) form, like a drop of water on a lotus leaf, should be known as Kshetrajna (Soul), which is Eternal, and which succeeds by Yoga in transcending both the mind and the knowledge.

[Note: The soul resides in the body without partaking of any of the attributes of the body. It is, therefore, likened to a drop of water on a lotus leaf, which, though on the leaf, is not yet attached to it, in so much that it may go off without at all soaking or drenching any part of the leaf.]

Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva are the attributes of the knowledge. The knowledge is the attribute of the individual soul residing within the body. The individual soul, in its turn, comes from the Supreme Soul. The body with the soul is said to be the attribute of jiva (embodied soul). It is jiva that acts and cause all bodies to live.

Of knowledge there is no end

From The Mahabharata
Aswamedha Parva, Section XLIV
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

Brahma (PrajApati) said: All actions end in destruction, and all that is born is certain to meet with death. Every mobile and immobile thing in this world is transient. Days end with the sun's setting and Nights with the sun's rising. The end of pleasure is always sorrow, and the end of sorrow is always pleasure. All accumulations have exhaustion for their end, and all ascents have falls for their end. All associations have dissociations for their end, and life has death for its end. Sacrifice, gift, penances, study, vows, observances, - all these have destruction for their end. Of Knowledge, there is no end. Hence, one that is possessed of a tranquil soul, that has subjugated his senses, that is freed from the sense of me-ness, that which is devoid of egoism, is released from all sins by pure knowledge.

From Vivekachudamani of Shankaracharya

Verses 11 & 10

Work leads to purification of the mind, not to perception of the Reality.
The realization of Truth is brought about by discrimination and not in the least by ten millions of acts. 11.

[Note: Comments by Swami Madhavananda,
Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas:
The idea is that works prescribed by the scriptures, when properly done, cleanse the mind of its impurities. Then the Truth flashes of itself.]

Let the wise and erudite man, having commenced the practice of the realization of the Atman (Self) give up all works and try to cut loose all bonds of birth and death. 10.
[Note: Comments by Swami Madhavananda: "All works" = All works done with motive, including the good ones prescribed in the scriptures and those that are evil, which men do prompted by their own nature.]

From The Mahabharata
Aswamedha Parva, Section XXXI
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

The Brahmana said: There are three foes in this world. They are said to be nine fold, agreeably to their qualities.

Exultation, satisfaction and joy; these three qualities appertain to Goodness (Sattva).

Cupidity, wrath and hatred ; these three qualities are said to appertain to Passion (Rajas).

Lassitude, procrastination and delusion ; these three qualities appertain to Darkness (Tamas).

Cutting these with showers of arrows, the man of intelligence, free from procrastination, possessed of a tranquil soul, and with his senses under subjection, ventures to vanquish others.

Kshetrajna (Supreme Lord) is eternal and is destitute of qualities as regards its essence. Kshetra (Prakriti or the manifest or matter) is that in which the qualities are produced and absorbed. Hence one who understands duties, casting off qualities and the understanding, and having his sins destroyed, and transcending the qualities, enters the Kshetrajna.

[Note: The realization of the Self is attained when one transcends or annihilates the three guNAs or qualities (Sattva, Rajas and Tamas). Spirit is devoid of qualities or attributes; matter is endowed with qualities or attributes. The qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas appertain to matter or Maya. Exultation, satisfaction and joy, although these are Sattvic qualities, are nevertheless qualities or attributes. With the aid of the Sattvic qualities, one transcends all the qualities and discards all the qualities, as when an athlete, pole-vaulting with the aid of a long pole, goes over (transcends) to the other side of the bar, but it is impossible for him to take the long pole with him over the bar, just so, likened to the pole are the Sattvic qualities which (casting off) have to be transcended along with the other two qualities of Rajas and Tamas.

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from the Mahabharata, Santi Parva
Section CCXXXI;

Mind is identical with the manifest

From The Mahabharata
Santi Parva, Section CCXXXII
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

The Creator creates with the help of Avidya (Maya or Prakriti) this universe. At first springs up that which is called Mahat. That Mahat is speedily transformed into Mind which is the soul of the Manifest

From The Mahabharata
Aswamedha Parva, Sec. XXXI
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

In days of old, king Ambarisha had acquired a tranquil soul. When diverse kinds of faults were in the ascendant and when the righteous were afflicted, Ambarisha of great fame put forth his strength for assuming sovereignty. Subduing his own faults and worshipping the righteous, he attained to great success and sang these verses:
'I have subdued many faults. I have killed all foes. But there is one, the greatest vice, which deserves to be destroyed but which has not been destroyed by me! Urged by that fault, this Jiva (embodied soul) fails to attain to freedom from desire. Afflicted by desire, one runs into ditches without knowing it. Urged by that fault, one indulges in acts that are forbidden.
Do thou cut off that cupidity with sharp-edged swords.

From cupidity arises desires. From desire flows anxiety. The man who yields to desire acquires many qualities that appertain to passion (Rajas). When these have been acquired, he gets many qualities that appertain to Darkness (Tamas). In consequence of those qualities, he repeatedly takes birth, with the bonds of body united, and is impelled to action. Upon the expiration of life, with body becoming dismembered and scattered, he once meets with death which is due to birth itself. Hence, duly understanding this, and subduing cupidity by intelligence, one should desire for sovereignty in one's soul. This is true sovereignty. There is no other sovereignty here. The soul, properly understood, is the king. Even these were the verses sung by king Ambarisha of great celebrity, on the subject of sovereignty which he kept before him; that king who had cut off the one foremost fault viz., cupidity '.

The Religion ordained for the householder
From the Mahabharata
Anusasana parva, Section CXLI
Translated by Sri Kisari Mohan Ganguli

Maheshwara said: The religion ordained for the householder is said to have Pravritti for its chief indication. Auspicious and beneficial to all creatures, I shall expound it to thee. The householder should always make gifts according to the measure of his power. He should also perform sacrifices frequently after the same manner. Indeed, he who wishes to achieve his own good should always achieve meritorious acts. The

householder should acquire wealth by righteous means. The wealth thus acquired should be carefully divided into three portions, keeping the requirements of righteousness in view. With one of those portions he should accomplish all acts of righteousness. With another he should seek to gratify his cravings for pleasure. The third portion he should lay out for increasing. Of all the modes of life, that of the householder is the first. Of this there is no doubt.

Abstention from injury, truthfulness of speech, compassion towards all beings, tranquility of soul, and the making of gifts to the best of one's power, are the foremost duties of the householder. Abstention from sexual congress with the spouses of other men, protection of the wealth and the woman committed to one's charge, unwillingness to appropriate what is not given to one, and avoidance of honey and meat, - these are the five chief duties. Indeed, Religion or Duty has many branches all of which are fraught with happiness. Even these are the duties which these embodied creatures who regard duty as superior should observe and practice. Even these are the sources of merit.

The conduct of husband and wife should be equal

The conduct of husband and wife, in the case of householder, should be equal. He should every day make offerings of flowers and other articles unto those deities that preside over domesticity. Well cleaned and well rubbed, his house should also be every day fumigated with the smoke of Homa (ghee or clarified butter poured on his sacred fire in honor of the deities and the Pitris or ancestors). Related articles "Mantras–Sacred " See column on the left]. Even these are the duties appertaining to the householder's mode of life as observable by a regenerate person. Those duties really uphold the world.

Householders of pure mind are capable of earning very great merit. Indeed, he who cleanses his soul by the performance of the five sacrifices (yajnas; the five yajnas or sacrifices are Deva yajna, Rishi yajna, Manushya yajna, Pitri yajna, and Bhuta yajna).

He who is truthful in speech, who is free from malice, who makes gifts, who treats with hospitality and honor all regenerate [Note: Regenerate is twice-born (Dvija):mother gives physical or genetic birth; teacher gives spiritual birth] guests, who lives in well cleansed abodes, who is free from pride, who is always sincere in his dealings, who uses sweet and assuring words towards others, who takes pleasure in serving guests and others arrived at his abode, and who eats the food that remains after the requirements have been gratified of all the members of his family and dependants, wins great merit.

That householder who rises at dawn, and serves food to his guests, and having honored them duly bids them farewell by following them (as mark of honor) for a little distance, acquires eternal merit. Hospitality towards all, and the pursuit of the aggregate of the three (Religion, Wealth and Pleasure), are the duties of the householder.

Chapter 3

The Core Values

Core Values

1.Integrity(1) Sattwa,Suddhi. A hankering for the truth is essential in this kind of endeavor (or any field of endeavor)

2.Celebration of Diversity (ability to synthesize opposing viewpoints, inability to do so is a sign of weakness and a sign of Avidya where one falls prey to Ahankara). *"Ekam sat Vipraa, bahudha vadanti."* "Truth is one, the wise call It by various names."

For many if not the vast majority, diversity signifies primarily if not exclusively diversity of ethnicities or races. But such a viewpoint ignores the very real diversity that exists in differing ideologies, opinions, experiences regardless of ethnic or class diversity. We maintain that the real test of being completely at home in a diverse environment, lies in synthesizing diverse viewpoints , while not necessarily agreeing with them.

3.Courage(dhairya, dhiratva)

to think outside the box and adopt new paradigms (Viswakarma)

to admit your mistakes, show remorse and apologize where applicable and move on (vairagya, detachment)

to persevere in the face of great odds and to fight against evil (Thithiksha)

4.Viveka, discriminate between what is good and what needs to be discarded

Preserve enduring traditions and values and discard those which are no longer relevant using Viveka

5.Compassion for those who need help and who cannot help themselves and those

who are disadvantaged in society and who need a helping hand

6.Reverence for all life forms in particular human life is a central core value. The taking of a human life is a grave matter and is permitted to societies (and nations) only under conditions of extreme provocation, such as self defense. To wage war to reclaim lost territory or to avenge past wrongs becomes highly problematic under the prevailing charter of internationally acceptable behavior. It is all the more imperative that when one is forced into war that the fight be fought with valor ,courage and single minded determination to win, since the alternative could be very costly, as India has learned from past experience.

7. Tolerance for Ambiguity. Contrary to Einstein, the world and the events that take place in this world are not deterministic. One can only describe certain phenomena in a probabilistic paradigm. The certainty in ones belief system may be a luxury only Prophets can afford. For, the rest of us we have to rest content with a degree of belief and tolerate the inherent ambiguities of many facets of life

8.Respect for the individual and his/her individuality. We thank Ishwara for blessing the human species with the gift of diversity and we believe in dealing with each individual based on his/her actions and behavior and not on the basis of their status or class or Varna in society

9. It is our belief that a study of history in general and our history in particular has lessons to teach us. We make no apology therefore for our emphasis on history in these pages, and our quest to unravel an account of our history that is accurate It behooves us therefore to study history in order to cull those actions, policies, principles and values that have stood the test of time ,while at the same time learning from those instances deemed generally to be failures. In short the purpose is not so much to dwell on the 'glories' of the past but to learn and continue to be inspired so as to aspire to reach even greater heights.

Chapter 4

Some important quotations

Quotations from/on sacred texts, History etc.

1. एकं सद विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्य" **RV 1:164:46**

   ekam sad vipraa bahudha vadantya

   Truth is One, but sages call it by many names.

2. पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात् पूर्णमुदच्यते
   पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते
   शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om poornamadah poornamidam
Poornaat poornamudachyate

Poornasya poornamaadaya
Poornamevaavashishyate

Meaning:

That (pure consciousness) is full (perfect); this (the manifest universe of matter; of names and forms being maya) is full. This fullness has been projected from that fullness. When this fullness merges in that fullness, all that remains is fullness.
- Peace invocation - Isa Upanishad

Another interpretation

This translates as follows : THAT is Infinite. THIS too is Infinite. And though it is from THAT which THIS has manifested, THAT alone remains unchanged. Peace ! Peace ! Peace !

The meaning is as follows :THAT refers to the one ultimate eternal existence. THIS refers to this transient existence which subsists in and which manifests from THAT. Yet all such transient manifestation does not alter THAT which remains infinite and eternal.

3. **Aum Bhadram Karnebhihi Srunuyaama Devaaha**
   Bhadram Pashyemaa Kshibhirya Jatraaha
   Sthirai Rangai Stushtuvaamsa Stanoobhihi
   Vyashema Devahitam Yadaayuhu Swasti Na Indro Vriddhashrava Swasti Na Pusha Vishwavedha|
   Swasti Nastarkshyo Arishta Nemihi Swasti Nobhrihaspatirdhaatu||
   Aum Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

   (Mandukyopanishad)

Meaning: Aum Hey Devaas, who are in the form of light, let our ears hear all good things. Hey worshippable *Devas,* let our eyes see good and holy things. May we spend this life given to us by God in continued prayers to You with a strong body, sound in health.

4. **Sarve Sukhinah Santhu**
   Sarve Santhu Niraamayaah
   Sarve Bhadraani Pashyantu
   Maa Kaschid Dukhabhaag Bhavet
   Aum Shanti Shanti Shantihi

Meaning: May all possess happiness. May all be healthy (free from all diseases). May all see beauty. May there be good fortune and no misery anywhere. May there be peace everywhere.

Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad 1.4.14

5. **Aum Saha Naavavathu Sahanau Bhunaktu**
   Saha Veeryam Kara Vaavahai
   Tejasvi Naavadheetamastu Maa Vidwishaavahai
   Aum Shantih Shantih Shantihi

ॐ सहनाववतू । सह नौभुनक्तु ।सहवीर्यँ करवावहै ।
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु । मा विद्विषावहै ।।
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।।

Meaning: May the Lord protect us both, may He nourish us both, may we work together with great vigor (divine strength). May we both acquire brilliance of our intellect through our studies, may we not hate each other. Let there be peace, peace, peace.

Katha Upanishad (Invocation)

6. असतो मा सद्गमय तमसो मा ज्योतीर्गमय

मृत्योर्मा अमृतमगमय

Meaning:
Lead us from the unreal to the Real
From darkness to Light
From death to Immortality

Theory of creation of the universe:
A 9th century Hindu scripture, *The MahapurAna* by Jinasena claims the something as modern as the following: (translation from [5])

7. ***Some foolish men declare that a Creator made the world. The doctrine that the world was created is ill-advised, and should be rejected. If God created the world, where was he before creation?... How could God have made the world without any raw material? If you say He made this first, and then the world, you are faced with an endless regression... Know that the world is uncreated, as time itself is, without beginning and end. And it is based on principles.***

Theories of the creation of universe are present in almost every culture. Mostly they represent some story portraying creation from mating of Gods or humans, or from some divine egg, essentially all of them reflecting the human endeavor to provide explanations to a grave scientific question using common human experience.

8. **Shuklam Baradaram Vishnum, Sasi Varnam Chatur Bhujam,**

Prasanna Vadanan Dyayet, Sarva Vignoba Sandaye **1**

शुक्लाम् भरदरम् विष्णुं, शशि वर्नम् छतुर् भ्हुजम्,

फ्रसन्न वदनम् ड्यायेत्, सर्व विघ्नोपशान्तये

Dressed in white you are,

Oh, all pervading one,

And glowing with the colour of moon.

With four arms, you are, the all knowing one

I meditate on your ever-smiling face,

And pray, " Remove all obstacles on my way".

10. **Saraswathi namasthubyam varadhe kaama roopiNi**
Vidhyaarambham karishyaami Siddhir Bhavathu me Sadaa

सरस्वथि नमस्थुब्यम् वरधे काम रूपिणि

विध्यारम्भम् करिश्यामि सिद्धिर् भवथु मे सदा ।

I Prostrate my self before Sarasvati, who fulfills every wish. Praying to her, I commence my education. I pray to her for its successful completion

Other Quotations

20. **GeorgeJoseph Gheverghese c.v**

Finally, if we accept the principle that teaching should be tailored to children's experience of the social and physical environment in which they live, mathematics should also draw on these experiences, which would include in contemporary Britain the presence of different ethnic minorities with their own mathematical heritage. Drawing on the mathematical traditions of these groups, indicating that these cultures are recognized and valued, would also help to counter the entrenched historical devaluation of them. Again, by promoting such an approach, mathematics is brought into contact with a wide range of disciplines,including art and design, history and social studies, which it conventionally ignores. Such a holistic approach would serve to augment, rather than fragment, a child's understanding and imagination

21. **Max Müller dated the Rig Veda to 1200-1500 BCE, but he also said that these dates were provisional and that he has "repeatedly dwelt on the hypothethical character of the dates... All I have claimed for them has been that they are minimum dates." (Müller 1892). And he also asserted: " Whether the Vedic hymns were composed 1000, or 1500, or 2000, or 3000 years BC, no power on earth will ever determine." (Müller 1891:91). Max Müller's contemporary critics have pointed out that "the whole foundation of Müller's date rests on the authority of Somadeva.. [who] narrated his tales in the twelfth century after Christ [and] would not be a little surprised to learn that "a European point of view" raises a "ghost story" of his to the dignity of a historical document." (Goldstücker 1860; Bryant 2001).**

The common heritage of the Indo-European languages is one of the most powerful and unexpected discoveries of modern science and elicited incredulity which is still to be encountered today. Max Müller recounted that any remarks on Sanskrit were treated with contempt by his teachers and that "no one was for a time so completely laughed down as Professor Bopp, when he first published his Comparative Grammar of Sanskrit, Zend, Greek, Latin and Gothic. All hands were against him." (Müller 1883).

22. Bhartrihari is the author of vairagya satakam (hundred verses on renunciation). In the verses, he reflects the inner struggles an aspirant faces in his sadhana. He was a king of Ujjaini and was said to be an extremely powerful and rich king. However, he renounced everything and became one of the great yogis. The reason can be traced to one of the verses (verse 31) in his vairagya satakam

भोगे रोगभयं कुले च्युतिभयं वित्त न्रुपालाद्भयं

माने दैन्यभयं बले रिपुबयं रूपे जराया भयम् ।

शास्त्रे वादिभयं गुणोखलभयंकाये क्रतान्ताद्भयम्

सरवं वस्तु बयान्वितं भुवि न्ण वै्राग्यमेवाभयम् ।।

bhoge rogabhayaü kule cyutibhayaü vitte nçpàlàdbhayaü |
màne dainyabhayaü bale ripubhayaü råpe jaràyà bhayam ||
÷àstre vàdibhayaü guõe khalabhayaü kàye kçtàntàdbhayaü |
sarvaü vastu bhayànvitaü bhuvi nçõàü vairàgyamevàbhayam ||

Verse 31,Vairagya Satakam

With enjoyment, comes fear of disease
With social position, fear of disfavor
With riches, fear of hostile people (kings)
With honor, fear of humiliation
With power, fear of enemies
With beauty, fear of old age

With scholarship, fear of challengers

With virtue, fear of traducers

With the identification with body, fear of death

Everything in this world is done with fear

Renunciation alone makes one fearless.

In a later verse (35), he brings out the beauty of self-surrender

Life trembles, like a drop of water on the edge of a lotus leaf

then it is swallowed by the wind

The wise fix their mind in Truth, which comes to all in the calm of self-surrender achieved by renunciation

23. **Surprisingly, although it is language that primarily connects all the IE peoples, linguistic evidence on its own is completely inadequate in determining absolute dates (Kazanas 1999: 17-8); one must resort to archaeological and cultural evidence. I have seriously changed my mind on this subject; I have no axe to grind, as it were, no position or reputation to maintain; I can and shall change my mind again if strong and sufficient evidence emerges. Prof Witzel raises many points for discussion some useful, some wasteful but offers no evidence other than conjecture. Conjecture or hypothesis is not admissible as evidence in any impartial Court of Law. (Nicholas Kazanas, The Date of the Rig veda, 2001)**
24. **The Harappans were obviously a literate and highly civilized people who maintained their 1000 year old culture with peaceful means through trade and perhaps religion rather than conquest and expansion. The area they inhabited was, according to Rao (1991: 1), ³1.5 million square kilometers² though I suspect it was much bigger. Then at about 2000 down to 1800, because of ecological and environmental changes including the alteration of the routes of some rivers and as a result, the desiccation of the SarasvatI river, they, or many of them, began to move eastwards to the Gangetic basin while their culture was breaking down. At about this time, then, enter our illiterate barbarians, the Aryans. Here the Allchins (Parpola and Witzel) fail to notice the glaring contradiction in their theory: if the Aryans had acquired the ³material culture and lifestyle² of the Harappans before they entered into Saptasindhu, then the RV hymns ought to reflect Harappan elements (urbanization, fixed fire-hearths, bricks, silver, cotton, rice); but it is the later texts (BrAhmaNas and sUtras) that do so, and not at all the RV hymns. Anyway, the Aryans take over and after 2 or 3 centuries produce a most astonishing collection of hymns, to be followed by other collections, various prose works about cultic rites and codes of social behaviour. Lord Renfrew (ignoring the archaeological evidence he cites) suggests they came as mounted bands and formed an élite (1989: 197) presumably with their horses alone since in all else they were just like the natives. All that the natives left were their ruined brick-built cities and some seals with inscriptions the nature and use of which is still unknown. In this Region of the Seven Rivers, then, we have an archaeologically well attested culture that seems to have no literature at all (other than the briefest inscriptions) no code of laws, no religious hymns or secular songs, no fables and tales, and then an illiterate people that is not archaeologically attested yet produces, in quick succession, all the kinds of literature that the previous culture lacked. It is a most amazing paradox, an astonishing coincidence of space, time and people. All this is, of course, possible just as it is possible to be struck by lightning in one¹s bed, or to fall from the 10th floor on the lawn below and live with only a few concussions. Many wondrous things are possible in life, but the question is do they really happen?**

25 . The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;

Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;

Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this li
and supremely happy with Him

Forever in the next. Amen. –

Reinhold Niebuhr



26. Lord McCauley in his speech of Feb 2, 1835, British Parliament

"I have travelled across the length and breadth of India and I have not seen one person who is a beggar, who is a thief. Such wealth I have seen in this country, such high moral values, people of such calibre, that I do not think we would ever conquer this country, unless we break the very backbone of this nation, which is her spiritual and cultural heritage, and, therefore, I propose that we replace her old and ancient education system, her culture, for if the Indians think that all that is foreign and English is good and greater than their own, they will lose their self-esteem, their native self-culture and they will become what we want them, a truly dominated nation".

Chapter 5

The Essential teachings of the Bhagavad Gita

भगवद् गीता

5.1 Introduction

The discourse on the Bhagavad Gita begins before the start of the climactic battle at Kurukshetra. It begins with the Pandava Prince Arjuna, as he is beset with doubt on the battlefield. Realizing that his enemies are his own relatives, beloved friends, and revered teachers, he turns to his charioteer and guide, Sri Krishna (an avatar of Sri Vishnu), for advice.

Sri Krishna counsels Arjuna, beginning with the tenet that the soul is both eternal and immortal. Any 'death' on the battlefield would involve only the shedding of the body but the inner soul is permanent. Sri Krishna goes on to expound on the yogic paths of devotion (Bhakti), action (Karma), meditation (Raja) and knowledge (Jnana). Fundamentally, the Bhagavad Gita proposes that true enlightenment comes from growing beyond identification with the Ego, the 'False Self', and that one must identify with the Truth of the immortal Self, (the soul or Atman). Through detachment from the material sense of Ego, the Yogi, or follower of a particular path of Yoga, is able to transcend his illusory mortality and attachment from the material world and enter into the realm of the Supreme.

To demonstrate his divine nature, Krishna grants Arjuna the boon of cosmic vision (albeit temporarily) and allows the prince to see His 'Universal Form'. He reveals that He is fundamentally both the ultimate essence of *Being* in the universe, and also its material body. This is called the Vishvarupa/Viratrupa.

The Gita refers to the war as Dharma Yuddha, meaning a just war. Chapter 4, verse 7, clearly states that God takes on incarnations to establish righteousness in the world.

The Bhagavad Gita describes the mind as turbulent and obstinate. 'The Chariot of the Body': Typically depicted as a chariot drawn by 5 horses which represent the five senses (tongue, eyes, nose, ears and skin), the rein symbolises the mind, the driver is the intelligence, and the passenger is the spirit soul.

Yohyam yogastvaya proktaha samyen Madhusudan

Aitasyaham pashyami chanchalatwatsthitim sthiram

Chanchal hi manaha Krishna

pramathi balwad dridham

Tasyaham nigraham manye vayorivam sudushkaram

Meaning - This yoga that has been declared by Thee of the nature of equanimity, O, Madhusudan, I see no stable foundation for it owing to restlessness.

Restless indeed is the mind, O, Krishna; it is vehement, strong and difficult to bend; I deem it as hard to control as the wind.

(Gita 6/33, 34)

5.2 Dating of the text

Though it is not exactly clear when the Bhagavad Gita was written, there is ample evidence that the Mahabharata of which the Bhagavad Gita is a part (Chapters 23 to 40) of the Bhishma Parva was composed by Veda Vyaasa around 3100 BCE. In our series of essays on Vedic Mathematicians elsewhere we try to reconstruct the timeline of the birth of the codified Sanskrit Language attributed to Panini. Such a codified form of Sanskrit (Classical Sanskrit) must post date the works of Panini (it is of course possible that Pannini's work was the culmination of others whom he makes mention of) and hence the Mahabharata in its present form could not have been written prior to Panini. Currently, we have dated Panini to have made his contributions circa 3500 BCE. However, the construction of many sentences, as also archaic forms of words in the Gita do not conform to the grammatical rules of Panini, Besides the word Yoga, according to Swami Gambhirananda is used in the Gita in a much wider sense than

that used by Patanjali in the Yogasutras and hence suggests that the Gita predates Patanjali and maybe even Panini. Whatever be the age of the Gita, it is certain that it precedes Buddhism and by any standard is of great antiquity and in our opinion is as old as the 4th millennium BCE.

5.3 The Scripture of Yoga

The Gita addresses the discord between the senses and the intuition of cosmic order. It speaks of the Yoga of equanimity, a detached outlook. The term Yoga covers a wide range of meanings, but in the context of the Bhagavad Gita, describes a integrated outlook, serenity of mind, skill in action, and the ability to stay attuned to the glory of the Self (Atman), which is of the same essence as the basis of Being (Brahman). According to Krishna, the root of all suffering and discord is the agitation of the mind caused by selfish desire. The only way to douse the flame of desire is by simultaneously stilling the mind through self discipline and engaging oneself in a higher form of activity.

However, abstinence from action is regarded as being just as detrimental as extreme indulgence. According to the Bhagavad Gita, the goal of life is to free the mind and intellect from their complexities, and to focus them on the glory of the Self, by dedicating one's actions to the divine. This goal can be achieved through the Yogas of meditation, action, devotion and knowledge. The Gita describes the best Yogi as one who constantly comtemplates God.

Sri Krishna summarizes the Yogas through eighteen chapters. There are four kinds of Yoga - Raja Yoga or *Psycho-Physical Meditation*, Bhakti Yoga or *Devotion*, Karma Yoga or *Selfless Action*, and Jnana Yoga or *Self Transcending Knowledge*.

While each path differs, their fundamental goal is the same - to realize Brahman (the *Divine Essence*) as being the ultimate truth upon which our material universe rests, that the body is temporal, and that the *Supreme Soul* (ParamAtman) is infinite. Yoga's aim (nirvana or moksha) is to escape from the cycle of reincarnation through realization of oneness with the ultimate reality. There are three stages to self-realization enunciated from the Bhagavad Gita:

1. Brahman - The impersonal universal energy

2. ParamAtman - The Supreme Soul sitting in the heart of every living entity.

3. Bhagavan - God as a personality, with a transcendental form.

The Bhagavad-Gita consists of 18 chapters. Each chapter is called a Yoga. Yoga is the science of the individual consciousness attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness. So each chapter is a highly specialized Yoga revealing the path of attaining realization of the Ultimate Truth. The first six chapters have been classified as the Karma Yoga section as they mainly deal with the science of the individual consciousness attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness through actions. These chapters are:

Chapter 1: Vishada Yoga

Chapter 2: Samkhya Yoga

Chapter 3 : Karma Yoga

Chapter 4 : Jnana Yoga

Chapter 5 : Karma Vairagya Yoga

Chapter 6 : Abhyasa Yoga

The middle six chapters have been designated as the Bhakti Yoga section as they principally are pertaining with the science of the individual consciousness attuning communion with the Ultimate Consciousness by the path of devotion.

Chapter 7 : Paramahamsa Vijnana Yoga

Chapter 8 : Aksara-Parabrahman Yoga

Chapter 9 : Raja-Vidya-Guhya Yoga

Chapter 10 : Vibhuti-Vistara-Yoga

Chapter 11 : Visvarupa-Darsana Yoga

Chapter 12 : Bhakti Yoga

The final six chapters are regarded as the Jnana Yoga section as they are primarily concerned with the science of the individual consciousness attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness through the intellect.

Chapter 13 : Ksetra-Ksetrajna Vibhaga Yoga

Chapter 14 : Gunatraya-Vibhaga Yoga

Chapter 15 : Purusottama Yoga

Chapter 16 : Daivasura-Sampad-Vibhaga Yoga

Chapter 17 : Sraddhatraya-Vibhaga Yoga

Chapter 18 : Moksa-Opadesa Yoga

The below are quotations from the Bhagavad Gita:

On The Goal Of Yoga

" And whoever, at the time of death, quits his body, remembering Me (Krishna) alone, at once attains My (Krishna's- Transcendental) nature. Of this there is no doubt."[3]

'mUkaM karoti vAcAlaM
paGguM laGghayate girim
yatkRpA tamahaM vande
paramAnanda mAdhavam' (invocation, verse 8)

My sincere salutations to that Madhava, the Beloved Husband of the Mother of Universe, the Source of Supreme Bliss, Whose Divine GRACE makes the dumb eloquent and the cripple cross mountains!!

'prapanna pArijAtAya
tOtra vetraika pANaye,
jnAnamudrAya kRSNAya
gItAmRta duhe namaH'

I fondly prostrate to the Milker of the Gita-Nectar, Lord Krishna, the wish-yielding divine Parijata Tree of those who take total refuge in Him, the holder of the cane in one hand and the bearer of the Jnana-mudra ,the Symbol of Knowledge!

Here the Lord is portrayed and remembered as the Milker, the Divine Cowherd Boy, Whose blissful exploits are lovingly sung by the Rasik Saints.

The Lord alone is the Dispenser of the Ultimate Joy and Unlimited Peace to His SURRENDERED devotees whose Spiritual Guide as well as the Giver of Transcendental knowledge being none else but the Lord Himself!!

'sarvopaniSado gAvo
dogdhA gopAla nandanaH,
pArtho vatsaH sudhIr bhoktA
dugdhaM gItAmRtaM mahat'

ALL the Upanishads are the Sacred Cows,
the Milker is the Divine Cowherd Boy, Lord Krishna,
Partha (Arjuna) is the Holy calf,
devotees with purified mind and heart are the drinking enjoyers, and the Milk itself is the Supreme Nectar of the Gita!

In this verse, Sri Krishna is again reminded to all as the Divine Shepherd and His eternal Friend, Arjuna, was USED as an instrument, as the calf to milk the cows who were Vedas themselves!

The ESSENCE of Divine knowledge and wisdom from the Scriptures was milked out with the help of Arjuna, so that the ardent pure-hearted spiritual seekers in the world could receive the full benefit of the Immortalizing Teachings of the Lord.

(Gita Dhyanam, Invocation- 8, 3, 4)

5.4 The essential ideas for an integrated life according to the Bhagavad Gita

Know the reality of the world we live in
Know the reality of one self and the relationship of the self with the supreme spirit or Brahman
Know the causes of instability of the mind, keeping in mind the goal of stability of the mind or equanimity (the key to the ultimate goal of realization of Brahman or realization of the supreme self)
Nurture the practice of true knowledge (pAra vidya) , of discrimination (Viveka) and of detachment (vairagya)
While action is important and needed for survival and prosperity it is the spirit of the action and the manner in which it Is invoked that is key to remaining unbound to the action by expectations and desires.
Know the nature of the Supreme Self and identify ones own Atman with Brahman
Know the true nature of devotion, surrender and sacrifice

Chapter 6

A Telugu Wedding

Telugu Wedding

A Telugu Wedding is an elaborate affair and comprises of a large number of rituals and ceremonies that spread over several days. It may be noted that there may be certain regional and caste variations regarding ceremonies related to Telugu wedding ceremony. However, what remains essentially the same is the highest regard of Telugu people for the institution of marriage.

Pre-Wedding Rituals:

Here is a short description of some of the popular pre-wedding rituals of a Telugu marriage ceremony.

- ### Nischitaartham

  Significance of Nischitaartham

  The wedding ceremony is the most celebrated social event in Indic societies . The concept of marriage as a major event in a human life, can be traced back to Vedic times. Mostly Hindu marriage ceremonies are elaborate ones and they may last for a few days especially among those who are wealthy enough to afford the same. Although the main wedding ceremony is a one-day affair, there are different ceremonies that are held on separate days preceding the main wedding ceremony. According to Hindu religion out of sixteen ceremonies in a person's lifetime, marriage is considered to be the thirteenth one. In most Indic societies where arranged marriages are not uncommon, the decisions regarding the conduct of the marriage are made jointly.

Once they decide, the date of the engagement and marriage is fixed. There are various pre wedding functions and rituals one of which is the engagement ceremony, and which is the most important since it marks the beginning of the wedding ceremony. In this day and age, especially among the Diaspora when an extended courtship appears to be the norm rather than the exception, it is not uncommon for an engagement ceremony to be held months before the wedding is conducted. It is known by different names in different regions of the country such as Misri, ring ceremony, aashirwad, Vaagdaanam or Vaakdaana , Nischitaartha and mangni. Nischitaartha means the process of making a decision and a commitment to each other, and is generally the term used in the Southern part of India. The term literally means "firming up". The ceremony is based on vedic practices going back over 5000 years begins with a Ganapati Puja and consists mainly of pledges between the 2 fathers. This is done by invoking the lineage of the families and making a formal proposal for the alliance. Variations notwithstanding, the general practice is for the father of the bride to make the initial overture. The affirmative response by the parents of the groom, signifies the resulting commitment to the marriage

In the Western tradition, an engagement consisting mainly of a proposal by the prospective groom to the intended bride to marry him is generally made in private and is accompanied by the gift of a ring to the lady. an engagement party may then take place depending on the interval between the engagement and the marriage itself

- Muhurtam: **Muhurtam means determining the auspicious part of the day for the marriage. The period that is considered auspicious starts from 7.00 p.m. and goes on till the next day until about 11 am. Telugu Weddings don't usually take place in the months of Aashad, Bhadrapada and Shunya as these months are considered not auspicious.**

- ***Chaitra***
  Vaishakh
  Jeshta
  Ashadh
  Shrawan(Sawan)
  Bhadrapad(Bhado)

Ashwin
Kartik
Margshirsh
Paush
Magha
Falgoon (Fagan)

- Pendlikoothuru: **This ceremony involves anointing the bride and the groom with oil and turmeric before bath. Following the bath, the couple dons new clothes. The bride-to-be wears flowers in her hair. She also adorns her forehead with a bindi or vermilion dot and wears bangles on her wrists.**

- Snathakam: **Snathakam ceremony is performed at the bridegroom's house before the muhurtam. It is a sort of thread ceremony that involves making the groom wear a silver thread on his body.**

- Kashi Yatra: **This is an extremely joyful ceremony. Following the tradition, after the recitation of Vedic verses, the groom pretends to leave for Kashi, a pilgrimage center to become an ascetic. He carries a walking stick and other essentials to show that he is not interested in becoming a householder anymore. He relents and agrees to the marriage only after he is stopped and persuaded by the bride's brother to fulfill his responsibilities as a householder.**

- Mangala Snaanam: **Following the custom, the bride and groom must take a Mangala Snaanam or an auspicious bath on the day of the wedding. The bath is believed to cleanse and purify them and make them ready for the sacred rites that are to follow.**

- Aarti: **After the ceremonial bath, the bride and groom are anointed with oil at their respective homes. Their families perform aarti. The ceremony is significant as it carries with it the family's prayer that the mind of the bride/groom be illuminated by wisdom.**

- Ganesh and Gauri Pooja: **The bridegroom performs Ganesh pooja in the mandapam or wedding hall just before the marriage**

ceremony. Worshipping the revered Ganesha who is the remover of all obstacles. Similarly, the bride performs Gauri Puja and seeks blessings for a blissful married life.

Wedding Rituals

A typical Telugu Wedding is full of joyous and colorful rituals. Please read on to know more about Telugu Wedding traditions.

- Kanyadaan: **A significant part of Hindu weddings, the Kanayadaan is that part of the marriage ceremony in which the girl's family gives her away to the groom. In a traditional Telugu wedding, bride's maternal uncle carries her in a bamboo basket to the mandapam where a curtain separates the bride and bridegroom. They are not to see each other until after the marriage ceremony. The priest invokes the blessings of the ancestors belonging to the last seven generations of both families. The bride's parents wash the groom's feet in a gesture that symbolizes their belief that he is a form of God to whom they now offer their daughter's hand.**

- Jeelakarra Bellamu: **After the priest recites the wedding shlokas from the Vedas, the bride and groom apply a paste of cumin seeds (jeera) and jaggery on each other's hands. This is known as Jeelakarra-Bellamu. This slightly bitter cumin and sweet jaggery when ground together turn into an inseparable mixture. The custom signifies that bride and groom are supposed to become inseparable through life's bitter and sweet times.**

- Madhuparkam: **For the Madhuparkam ceremony the bride wears a white cotton sari with a red border, while the groom dons a white cotton dhoti with a red border. White signifies purity and chastity, while red color represents strength.**

- Sumangli: **Under this ceremony, ten married women (Sumangalis) accompany the bride. Six of them hold plates full of rice and turmeric powder mixed together. The remaining hold plates with small lamps made from a mixture of rice flour, sugar and milk. Rice signifies abundance while lit lamps represent sweetness and light, two qualities that the bride brings with her to this new phase of life.**

- Tying of the Mangalsutra: **To carry out this ritual, the curtain between the bride and the groom is removed. After offering prayers, the groom ties the two strings each with a golden disc representing the Mangalsutra separately around the bride's neck with three knots to represent the strength of their union physical, mental and spiritual.**

- Kanyadaan Akshata: **After the mangalsutra ceremony, the couple exchange garlands. Those present at the wedding shower their blessings on the couple by sprinkling flowers and turmeric-colored rice or Akshat on them.**

- Saptapadi: **'Saptapadi' or seven steps are what the couple takes together. In this ceremony the bride's saree and the groom's dhoti are tied together at one end in a knot. In each step that he takes, the groom prays for life-long blessings. During this ceremony, saris, ornaments and other gifts are offered to the couple and to other family members.**

- Sthaalipaakam: **In this sweet ceremony, the groom slips silver toe rings on the bride's feet. The girl is also adorned with a string of black beads, to protect her from the evil eye.**

Post-Wedding Rituals:

Given here is a short description of some prominent post-wedding rituals of a traditional Telugu Wedding.

- Grihapravesh: **When the marriage ceremony is over the bride is**

ceremonially taken to the groom's home for Griha Pravesh (entering the house for the first time). Here, the in-laws give the bride a warm welcome.

- Uniting the Mangalsutra: **As is customary in a Telugu wedding, the two mangalsutras are united on a common thread 16 days after the wedding. An elder member of the family or the husband himself can unite the two mangalsutras on a common thread. A few black or golden beads are slipped between the two plates so that they don't clash with each other. Signifying harmony between the two families. The bride takes a bath and wears a new sari before wearing the mangalsutra on this day. 16 days are symbolic of the time needed by the bride to understand her husband's family.**

Chapter 7

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Appendix A

Central Core Beliefs of Sanatana Dharma

Belief in a Supreme Brahman and the relationship between the Atman and the Brahman (the essential divinity of the human spirit)

Freedom to choose an Ishta Devata (personal Deity) realizing such freedom could result in different choices of deities

Belief in Free Will and its relationship to Karma

Freedom to pursue Purushaartha or Chaturvarga (the four goals of life dharma, artha, kaama and moksha) on the path to Self Realization

Observe the ethical responsibilities enjoined by the Dharma (Personal Responsibility and accountability)

Appendix B

Friendship: The Vedic Prescription for Hindu Weddings

by

Dr. A. V. Srinivasan *

The commitment to marry is perhaps the most important and most complex decision made by individuals irrespective of geography or cultural background. Imagine how much more complex and difficult it can be if you are an immigrant in a land whose traditions, culture and history are quite different from those in the land of your birth. Needless to say that the decision gets no less difficult if you are of a second generation. Such is the case with many Indians growing up in North America today.

Second generation Indians growing up here in North America are coming into their own and it is not easy for them. When they fall in love and decide to get married they are naturally apprehensive about traditions that they would like to follow even when their partner is Indian. Imagine their concerns when one of the partners has no Indian background. Growing up in a land where their neighbors, classmates and friends are not Indians, they are exposed to indigenous practices in weddings or bar-mitzvahs that bear little resemblance to what they have experienced in similar functions either within the Indian community here or when they visit their relatives in India. Their concerns are dual: first to make sure they design a ceremony that does justice to their own tradition (but largely that of their parents), and, second, to make sure that they and their friends somehow relate to it on their very special day. This is pressure. Young people find it hard to cope not only due to the many unknowns implicit in a wedding preparation but also the ceremony itself with Sanskrit mantras, procedures and steps that are not entirely clear to the couple. Justified or not, it is truly a burden felt by the youth.

This is precisely where a knowledge of the Vedas may go a long way to help the couple to (1) be aware of the fundamentals driving the ceremonies, (2) understand the spirit of the approach to performing such wedding rites and (3) appreciate the sheer beauty and depth involved in the procedures. If relevant sections of the Vedas are studied carefully by the families, considerable confusion may be cleared away leading to a more rational and calm approach to the planning stage. When the couple realizes that the core message in the Vedas is truly modern in that it insists on truth rather than belief, joy instead of fatalism, friendship and community along with duty, here; rather than hereafter, they are in for a pleasant surprise and can become brave souls ready to immerse themselves in this old nectar of a philosophy that refuses to yield to narrow outlook on life on this earth.

Popular misconceptions notwithstanding, a study of the Vedas reveals how practical the findings of the ancient sages can be. Vedic sages were positive in their acceptance of life and death, life's struggles and imperfections, positive in their acceptance of the ultimate values - of truth, goodness and beauty. Vedic sages loved life as well as God and every wish of theirs for the good things of the earth took the form of an ardent prayer. Such prayers are blended into the Vedic wedding ceremony.

Consider the religious basis of these procedures. According to Abinash Chandra Bose (*The Call of the Vedas*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1970), "Veda places truth first and ritual last in religion." This does not deny rituals but their due place is clear as "Ultimately, in religion, as understood in ancient India, it is not so much a question of theism and atheism as it is one of truth and untruth."

The Vedas proclaim that the true goal of life is freedom and this freedom from attachment, freedom from our lower selves brings such joy that it is simply incomparable to the usual kinds of joy most recognize. Fulfillment in life is the focus in a conjugal union and is reached when one accomplishes *chaturvidha phala purushartha* i.e. four aspects of life known as d*harma, artha and kama* leading to the complete release of bondage and to total freedom known as m*oksha*. *Dharma* truly forms the very core of Hindu philosophy. The inclusion of artha (financial aspect) and kama (aspects of love) in this series confirms the practicality of Vedic thought.

Dharma is built into Vedic theism and every mantra uttered in wedding ceremonies implies this subtle relationship. And "…joy of life is evident in the attitude of worship. The mood of worship in the Vedas is not a gloomy one. Worship, like song and poetry, is an overflow of the joy of the soul: …" The insistence on celebrating life on this earth should be evident because, in the Vedas "… there is scanty reference to the world to

come.” Here and now is the emphasis. “There is no waiting for a world to come; we must be “happy here (*iha*) and now (*adya* or *idAnIm*).” Bose quotes further from the Atharva Veda “This world is the most beloved of all; “*ayaM lokaH priyamataH*” (Ath. V. 30.17).

The priority of Hindu ancestors is clear and unambiguous. The marriage vows and hymns, according to Bose “give a most idyllic and romantic picture of the conjugal union.” Consider the “Loving Whisper” from the Rig Veda (R. VI. 75.3). “As if desirous of speaking, she presses close to the ear, holding her beloved friend in her embraces; Strained on the bow, she whispers like a young woman, -This Bow-string that preserves (the warrior) in the battle.” A beautiful analogy in which the sound of bowstring drawing an arrow close to one’s ear is compared to that of whispers of a lover. “Here the ideas of heroism of the Kshatriya and romanticism of the conjugal (*Grihastha*) are intermingled” giving full expression to both. If this isn’t love of life by the Vedic seers, what else can it be? Joy and strength in one beautiful passage of poetry!

The July 1989 issue of Readers Digest carried an article entitled "Surprising Key to the Happiest Couples" written by two psychologists who conclude that "Romance ‘talks’ about love but it is friendship that puts love to the ultimate test." They continue: " If there is one prevailing wish that husbands and wives have for their marriage, it is to be close companions for life. While many men and women know that love is essential for such a lifelong bond, they often don't realize that love without close friendship is only a hormonal illusion. One cannot desire another person over the long haul without really being best friends with that person.” That this is not a newly discovered concept is evident when we examine the contents of a step essential in a Vedic Wedding ceremony known as *Saptapadi*. During *Saptapadi*, the bride and the groom hold hands and take seven steps together as husband and wife as they walk around Agni, the God of fire, (the kindled fire symbolic of their new hearth) and pledge to each other their eternal friendship. What they say after they have taken those seven steps is unquestionably the foundation for a successful marriage. Together they chant:

सखासप्तपदि भव सख्यं ते गमेयळ

सख्यं ते मयोषः सख्यं ते मायोष्ठः

sakhaa sapta padI bhava sakhyaM tE gamEyaM sakhyaM tE mAyOshaH sakhyaM tE mAyOshTaH

With these seven steps you have become my friend. May I deserve your friendship,

May my friendship make me one with you.

May your friendship make you one with me."

Anyone who has any question about the role of a woman in Hindu marriage should pay special attention to the charge and blessing by the presiding priest at the end of saptapadi. He recites:

साम्राज्नी श्वशुरेभव। साम्राज्नी श्वश्रुवांभव।

ननंदाारि नामराज्नीभव। साम्राज्नी आदिदेव्रषु ।

saamraajnI shvashurEbhava, saamraajnI shvashruvaaMbhava, nanaMdaari naamraajnIbhava, saamraajnI adhidEvraShu

Be queenly with your father-in-law, Be queenly with your mother-in-law, Be queenly

with his sisters, Be queenly with his brothers

Nothing short of the status of a queen is what the scriptures prescribe. Our ancestors went even further: they blessed the bride by saying;

मूर्धानं पत्युरारोह

mUrdhAnaM patyurArOha "

May your husband keep you on his head" meaning "let him respect you."

And we have further confirmation of this essential commitment to friendship in the Mahabharata. In the Aranya Parva of that great epic of the Hindus known as the Mahabharata, one of the 120 questions (See my book: *Yaksha Prashna: A Hindu Primer*, Second Edition, Periplus Line LLC, 2002 released by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan) the Yaksha asked Yudhishtira was "*kimsvin mitram grihesatah*?" i.e.Who is the friend of a householder? To which the prince answered " *bhaaryaa mitram grihesatah*" i.e. the friend of a householder is his spouse. In another question the Yaksha asks Yudhishtira:

किंस्विद् दैव कुंतः सख

kiMsvid daiva kRutaH sakhA

Who is man's god-given friend?

Yudhishtira's answer was:

भार्या दैव कुंतः सख

bhaaryaa daivakRutaH sakhA

A man's God-given friend is his wife.

Again the basis of friendship in marriage is emphasized. According to Hindus, therefore, the basis for marriage is friendship. According to Hindus, this friendship is the understanding, the promise and the commitment that unites a man and a woman. There is absolutely no question about the role of a woman, her importance, her position in this equation that binds them together. The answer by the hero crystallizes the Hindu belief that friendship between a couple is the true basis for the union.

In fulfilling the four aspects of life discussed above, the demands of artha and kama in the lives of married people are in apparent conflict with the dictates of dharma and moksha. How does the Hindu resolve this apparent contradiction? This in fact was another question asked of Yudhishtira by the Yaksha:

धर्मष्च आर्थष्च काामष्च प विरोधिनः ईषाँ नित्य विरुधिनाम कथमएकत्र सळ्गामः

dharmashcaarthashca kaamashca paraspara virOdhinaH EshaaM nitya viruddhaanaam kathamEkatra saMgamaH

Dharma, artha and kama conflict with each other. How can these contraries be reconciled? How can a householder necessarily involved in the pursuit of the good life seeking artha and kama in raising a family and serving a community not find himself in conflict with dharma and how can he strive for moksha? Notice that artha and kama are safely sandwiched between dharma and moksha. If salvation is to be your goal, the ancient Hindus said, then by all means participate fully in the affairs of society, raise a family, enjoy the good life in a responsible way, serve the community- all within the framework of dharma.

How does a grhasttha reconcile these contrary requirements? According to Yudhishtira, there is only one way and that is:

यधा धर्मष्च भार्याच परास्परा वषाानुगौ ।

तधाा धर्मार्थ काामनाम त्रायाणाामपि सळ्गामः।।

yadaa dharmashca bhaaryaaca paraspara vashaanugau tadaa dharmaartha kaamanaam trayaaNaamapi saMgamaH

"When dharma and one's wife are in harmony , then dharma, artha and kama are reconciled."

In other words, a person, in order to keep that delicate balance among the attributes of artha and kama, has to have a spouse who is dharmic. It is that protection coming from such a spouse, that torchlight, that spirit of friendship and cooperation and sacrifice that gives a reasonable chance for a couple to succeed in meeting this challenge of conflicting attributes. This is precisely the reason that during the wedding *homas* in the ceremony, the couple go around the fire four times; the first three rounds led by the groom but the last one is led by the bride. The basic purpose of a Vedic wedding ceremony is to help unite a couple in the Vedic tradition. Understanding each step and the various vows is essential irrespective of the ability to repeat the mantras. Each step in the ceremony conveys implicitly or explicitly an understanding between the two. The principals inherit the burden of providing the umbrella of dharma so that the family they are about to raise, their own family, would be a *dharmic* one. A Hindu wife plays a major role in this burden that some may consider unfair. But that IS the tradition and expectation. That is why a Hindu wife is not simply referred to as *patni* (wife) but she is a *dharmapatni*, a wife-in-dharma. This then is the reason for that very special, very unique, very necessary role a woman was called upon to play in the Hindu household.

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About the author

Dr. Srinivasan currently serves as Adjunct Professor at the Asian American

Studies Institute at the University of Connecticut. He was born in the village of Amruthur, Kunigal Taluk in the Karnataka State. He is the primary founder of the Connecticut Valley Hindu Temple Society (1979) and served as its first President. He functions as a Hindu Priest in Connecticut performing a wide variety of pujas, ceremonies, weddings, house-warming, and bhajans since 1971. He has developed a format for weddings of Hindu youngsters based on the Vedas. He delivered monthly lectures on the Bhagavadgita for over 9 years and monthly lectures on the Mahabharata to the Indian community for a period of 5 years. He has published a book entitled Yaksha Prashna: A Hindu Primer, the second edition of which was released by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in 2002. He choreographed and directed a play, " The Coronation of Ramachandra", which was performed by the children in the community in 1984 and 1985. He has published/presented over 100 papers on a variety of cultural, social and religious issues in the U.S. and India, the most recent contribution is a paper "Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitaha" that appeared in the June 2005 issue of the Bhavan's Journal. His recent book Pada Yatra was published in 2005 for and in behalf of the Connecticut Valley Hindu Temple Society. He serves as member, Interfaith Council, Glastonbury, CT. He was nominated to receive the Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 1993. He taught Epics of India in the History Department at University of Connecticut (1995) and taught Sanskrit to graduate students at Wesleyan University in 1985.

Appendix C

The Hindu Vedic Wedding

Wedding Ceremony

Mehendi and Peeth
i

A day before the wedding the palm and feet of the bride are decorated with "Mendhi". A canopy or mandap decorated with flowers is erected at the place of wedding. On the wedding morning, various ablutionary rituals are performed on both the bride and the groom in their own homes. Their bodies are anointed with turmeric, sandalwood paste and oils, which cleanse the body, soften the skin, and make it aromatic. They are then bathed to the chanting of Vedic mantras

Laya (Laja) Homa : The Oblation of Parched Grain

Here the bride offers sacrifice of food (poured into her hands by her brother or someone acting in her brother's behalf) to the Gods for their blessings. "This grain I spill. May it bring to me wellbeing and unite you to me. May Agni hear us." He then asks the bride to spill the grain into the fire, saying: "This woman scattering grain into the fire, prays: Blessings on my husband. May my relatives be prosperous".





Vara Yaatra ,Baarat (Wedding Procession)

The Bridegroom arrives for the wedding along with his family and friends in a procession. They are then received by the bride's family and friends.

Swaagatam/Milni

Commencement of Marriage

The priest commences the marriage under a canopy that is specially decorated for the ceremony. The priest invokes blessings of God for the couple to be married. The bride offers yogurt and honey to the groom as a token of purity and sweetness. The bride greets the groom by placing a garland around his neck and the groom reciprocates. Both are congratulated by guests. The priest invokes the memory and blessings of forefathers of the bride and the groom for this auspicious occasion.

Vara Puja
JaiMala
Pravara





Kanya Daanam (Giving Away of the Daughter)

The bride accepts her change of status from an unmarried woman to a wife by spreading turmeric powder on her hands. Kanya Danam is performed by the father (or uncle of guardian) of the bride in presence of a large gathering that is invited to witness the wedding. The father pours out a libation of sacred water symbolizing the giving away of the daughter to the bridegroom. The groom recites Vedic hymns to Kama, the God of love, for pure love and blessings. As a condition for offering his daughter for marriage, the father of the bride requests a promise from the groom for assisting the bride in realizing the three ends : dharma, artha, and kama. The groom makes the promise by repeating three times that he will not fail the bride in realizing dharma, artha and kama.

Paanigrahana or Hasta Milap (Holding the Hand)

The bridegroom stands facing west and the bride sits in front of him facing east. He seizes her hand and recites Vedic hymns for happiness, long life, and a lifelong relationship When the Bridegroom Takes the Bride's Hand, He Says : "O Sarasvati, gracious one, rich in off spring, you whom we hymm first of all the Gods, may you prosper this marriage. "I seize your hand."



Maangalyadhaaranam (Tying the mangalsutra) OR Mangal Sutra DhArana

The Mangala sutra DhArana is the tying of the thread containing the marks of the Vishnu or Shiva in the neck of the bride by the groom.



Vivaaha (Wedding)

The bride and the bridegroom face each other, and the priest ties their garments (the bride's saree to the groom's shirt) in a knot, symbolizing the sacred union. The bride and the bridegroom garland each other and exchange the rings. Next the nuptial fire, symbolizing the divine witness, and the sanctifier of the sacrament, is installed and worshipped. Both the bride and the groom grasp their hands together and pray to God for His blessings. Samagree, consisting of crushed sandalwood, herbs, sugar, rice, ghee (clarified butter), and twigs is offered into the sacred fire to seek God's blessings for the couple.

Agni Parinaya or Mangal Phera : The Circumambulation of the Fire

The bridegroom holds the bride by the hand and both walk three times around the nuptial fire. Both offer oblations and recite appropriate Vedic hymns to Gods for prosperity, good fortune, and conjugal fidelity. They touch each others heart and pray for union of their hearts and minds While walking around the bridegroom repeats: "First now they bring to you in bridal procession this Surya, guiding her steps in circular motion. Return her now, O Agni, to her husband as rightful wife, with hope of children to come." Then the entire rite is repeated twice more, beginning with the rite of the fried grain. At the fourth round she pours into the re all the fried grain from the mouth of the winnowing basket saying: "To Bhaga Svaha!"



Asmaarohana or Shilarohana (Mounting the Stone)

At the end of each round of nuptial fire, both the bride and the groom step on a stone and offer a prayer for their mutual love to be firm and steadfast like the stone.



Saptapadi (Seven Steps)

This is the most important rite of the entire ceremony. Here the bride and the bridegroom take seven steps together around teh nuptial fire (Agni) and make the following seven promises to each other :As per the Vedic rituals, the bridegroom sings the following : With God as Our Guide, Let Us Take,

- **the first step to nourish each other**
- **the second step to grow together in strength**
- **the third step to preserve our wealth**
- **the fourth step to share our joys and sorrows**
- **the fifth step to care for our children**
- **the sixth step to be together forever**
- **the seventh step to remain lifelong friends,**

the perfect halves to make a perfect whole. After the seventh step he makes her remain where she is and says: "With seven steps we become friends. Let me reach your friendship. Let me not be severed from your friendship. Let your friendship not be severed from me." The Saptapadi ceremony concludes with a prayer that the union is indissoluble. At the end of this ceremony, the bridegroom and bride become husband and wife. In some communities such as Gujarati, instead of seven, only four steps, signifying Artha, Dharma, Kama and Moksha are taken.

According to Indian Civil Law, this ,the taking of the 7th step signifies the defining moment of a Hindu marriage

Suhaag or Sindhoordana

The groom places sindhoor (red powder) on the bride's hair symbolizing her as a married woman.

Post-Marriage Game Playing

There are several regional variations to this ceremony.

Aeki-Beki

In the groom's house a game called aeki-beki is played, by placing a ring and several coins in a tray of water which is colored by vermilion and milk. It is said that the person who finds the ring four times, will rule the house

Talambra

In many South Indian marriages the rice mixed with the turmeric is poured over the heads of groom and bride, by bride and groom. After this there are ceremonies of name calling singing and other games aimed at the bringing the bride and the groom closer.

Arundhati Darshan

Arundhathi Darshana is the showing of the Saptha Rishi Mandala and the small star Arundhathi underneath the star of Vashistha. These seven sages and their families are the originators of the Vedic Lore of the Hindus. In memoriam of these great sages the seven stars in the Great Bear constellation are named after them. The significance of this ritual is to remind the couple of the cosmic responsibilities they have to fulfill. Darshan of these Great Sages is intended to remind the couple the heritage they have to carry and the debt to the sages they have to pay.

Dhruva Darshan - Looking at the Polestar

After sunset he shows her the polar star, saying: "You are firm and I see you. Be firm with me, O nourishing one! Brhaspati has given you to me, so live with me a hundred years bearing children by me, your husband."

Aashirvaad

The groom's parents bless the couple and offer cloth or flower to the bride (now their daugher-in-law), symbolizing her joining of the groom's family. All those assembled shower flowers on the couple and bless them completing the marriage.



Grahapravesha - Entering the Home

The couple depart from the girl's house after the vidai , for the groom's house. They carry behind the couple the sacred fire in a vessel. They should keep the fire constantly alight. When they reach his house, he says: "Enter with your right foot. Do not remain outside." The bride enters the home placing the right foot - considered auspicious, first. When the bride and the groom enter the groom's house, the mother of the groom welcomes the bride by doing an arati. They sit silently until the stars are visible.

Appendix D

From 'Dialogues with the Guru' talks with Sri Chandrasekhar Bharathi Swaminah, late Sankaracharya of Sringeri Matha Compiled by R Krishnaswami Aiyar with an introduction by Paul Masson Oursel, Published by Chetana Ltd., Bombay, 1956

Among the species that we are cognizant of, man is clearly endowed with the capacity of exercising free will, unfettered by instinctual responses conditioned by genetic predisposition. Man is endowed with the freedom to make choices. The following dialog address the issue of freewill versus fate, which one may mistakenly assume that he has little or no control over. In reality Hinduism ,popular misconceptions notwithstanding, is an activist take charge system for living which strongly advocates individual Yogas such as karma and Jnana Yoga to achieve the purushaarthas of one 's life and the Bhjagavad Gita is an affirmation of the 'Carpe Diem' approach that the Hindu generally follows

The Riddle of Fate and Free-Will

(A dialog between His Holiness Shri Chandrashekhara Bharati Mahaswami and a Disciple): [His Holiness was the Sringeri Mathadhipati 1912-1954.]

H.H. : I hope you are pursuing your studies in the Vedanta as usual?

D. : Though not regularly, I do make some occasional study.

H.H. : In the course of your studies, you may have come across many doubts.

D. : Yes, one doubt repeatedly comes up to my mind.

H.H. : What is it?

D. : It is the problem of the eternal conflict between fate and free-will. What are their respective provinces and how can the conflict be avoided?

H.H. : If presented in the way you have done it, the problem would baffle even the highest of thinkers.

D. : What is wrong with my presentation? I only stated the problem and did not even explain how I find it to be a difficult one.

H.H. : Your difficulty arises in the very statement of the problem.

D. : How?

H.H. : A conflict arises only if there are two things. There can be no conflict if there is only one thing.

D. : But here there are two things, fate and free-will.

H.H. : Exactly. It is this assumption of yours that is responsible for your problem.

D. : It is not my assumption at all. How can I ignore the fact that the two things exist as independent factors, whether I grant their existence or not?

H.H. : That is where you are wrong again.

D. : How?

H.H. : As a follower of our Sanatana Dharma, you must know that fate is nothing extraneous to yourself, but only the sum total of the consequences of your past actions. As God is but the dispenser of the fruits of actions, fate, representing those fruits, is not his creation but only yours. Free-will is what you exercise when you act now.

D. : Still I do not see how they are not two distinct things.

H.H. : Have it this way. Fate is past karma; free-will is present karma. Both are really one, that is, karma, though they may differ in the matter of time. There can be no conflict when they are really one.

D. : But the difference in time is a vital difference which we cannot possibly overlook.

H.H. : I do not want you to overlook it, but only to study it more deeply. The present is before you and, by the exercise of free-will, you can attempt to shape it. The past is past and is therefore beyond your vision and is rightly called adrishta, the unseen. You cannot reasonably attempt to find out the relative strength of two things unless both of them are before you. But, by our very definition, free-will, the present karma, alone is before you and fate, the past karma, is invisible. Even if you see two wrestlers right in front of you, you cannot decide about their relative strength. For, one may have weight, the other agility; one muscles and the other tenacity; one the benefit of practice and the other coolness of judgment and so on. We can go on building arguments on arguments to conclude that a particular wrestler will be the winner. But experience shows that each of these qualifications may fail at any time or may prove to be a disqualification. The only practical method of determining their relative strength will be to make them wrestle. While this is so, how do you expect to find by means of arguments a solution to the problem of the relative value of fate and free-will when the former by its very nature is unseen!

D. : Is there no way then of solving this problem?

H.H. : There is this way. The wrestlers must fight with each other and prove which of them is the stronger.

D. : In other words, the problem of conflict will get solved only at the end of the conflict. But at that time the problem will have ceased to have any practical significance.

H.H. : Not only so, it will cease to exist.

D. : That is, before the conflict begins, the problem is incapable of solution; and, after the conflict ends, it is no longer necessary to find a solution.

H.H. : Just so. In either case, it is profitless to embark on the enquiry as to the relative strength of fate and free-will.

Fate :A Guide to Conduct

D. : Does Your Holiness then mean to say that we must resign ourselves to fate?

H.H. : Certainly not. On the other hand, you must devote yourself to free-will.

D. : How can that be?

H.H. : Fate, as I told you, is the resultant of the past exercise of your free-will. By exercising your free-will in the past, you brought on the resultant fate. By exercising your free-will in the present, I want you to wipe out your past record if it hurts you, or to add to it if you find it enjoyable. In any case. whether for acquiring more happiness or for reducing misery. you have to exercise your free-will in the present.

D. : But the exercise of free-will however well-directed, very often fails to secure the desired result, as fate steps in and nullifies the action of free-will.

H.H. : You are again ignoring our definition of fate. It is not an extraneous and a new thing which steps in to nullify your free-will. On the other hand, it is already in yourself.

D. : It may be so, but its existence is felt only when it comes into conflict with free-will. How can we possibly wipe out the past record when we do not know nor have the means of knowing what it is?

H.H. : Except to a very few highly advanced souls, the past certainly remains unknown. But even our ignorance of it is very often an advantage to us. For, if we happen to know all the results we have accumulated by our actions in this and our past lives, we will be so much shocked as to give up in despair any attempt to overcome or mitigate them. Even in this life, forgetfulness is a boon which the merciful God has been pleased to bestow on us, so that we may not be burdened at any moment with a recollection of all that has happened in the past. Similarly, the divine spark in us is ever bright with hope and makes it possible for us to

confidently exercise our free-will. It is not for us to belittle the significance of these two boons-- forgetfulness of the past and hope for the future.

D. : Our ignorance of the past may be useful in not deterring the exercise of the free-will, and hope may stimulate that exercise. All the same, it cannot be denied that fate very often does present a formidable obstacle in the way of such exercise.

H.H. : It is not quite correct to say that fate places obstacles in the way of free-will. On the other hand, by seeming to oppose our efforts, it tells us what is the extent of free-will that is necessary now to bear fruit. Ordinarily for the purpose of securing a single benefit, a particular activity is prescribed; but we do not know how intensively or how repeatedly that activity has to be pursued or persisted in. If we do not succeed at the very first attempt, we can easily deduce that in the past we have exercised our free-will just in the opposite direction, that the resultant of that past activity has first to be eliminated and that our present effort must be proportionate to that past activity. Thus, the obstacle which fate seems to offer is just the gauge by which we have to guide our present activities.

D. : The obstacle is seen only after the exercise of our free-will; how can that help us to guide our activities at the start?

H.H. : It need not guide us at the start. At the start, you must not be obsessed at all with the idea that there will be any obstacle in your way. Start with boundless hope and with the presumption that there is nothing in the way of your exercising the free-will. If you do not succeed, tell yourself then that there has been in the past a counter-influence brought on by yourself by exercising your free-will in the other direction and, therefore, you must now exercise your free-will with re-doubled vigor and persistence to achieve your object. Tell yourself that, inasmuch as the seeming obstacle is of your own making, it is certainly within your competence to overcome it. If you do not succeed even after this renewed effort, there can be absolutely no justification for despair, for fate being but a creature of

your free-will can never be stronger than your free-will. Your failure only means that your present exercise of free-will is not sufficient to counteract the result of the past exercise of it. In other words, there is no question of a relative proportion between fate and free-will as distinct factors in life. The relative proportion is only as between the intensity of our past action and the intensity of our present action.

D. : But even so, the relative intensity can be realized only at the end of our present effort in a particular direction.

H.H. : It is always so in the case of everything which is adrishta or unseen. Take, for example, a nail driven into a wooden pillar. When you see it for the first time, you actually see, say, an inch of it projecting out of the pillar. The rest of it has gone into the wood and you cannot now see what exact length of the nail is imbedded in the wood. That length, therefore, is unseen or adrishta, so far as you are concerned. Beautifully varnished as the pillar is, you do not know what is the composition of the wood in which the nail is driven. That also is unseen or adrishta. Now, suppose you want to pull that nail out, can you tell me how many pulls will be necessary and how powerful each pull has to be?

D. : How can I? The number and the intensity of the pulls will depend upon the length which has gone into the wood.

H.H. : Certainly so. And the length which has gone into the wood is not arbitrary, but depended upon the number of strokes which drove it in and the intensity of each of such strokes and the resistance which the wood offered to them.

D. : It is so.

H.H. : The number and intensity of the pulls needed to take out the nail depend therefore upon the number and intensity of the strokes which drove it in.

D. : Yes.

H.H. : But the strokes that drove in the nail are now unseen and unseeable. They relate to the past and are adrishta.

D. : Yes.

H.H. : Do we stop from pulling out the nail simply because we happen to be ignorant of the length of the nail in the wood or of the number and intensity of the strokes which drove it in? Or, do we persist in pulling it out by increasing our effort?

D. : Certainly, as practical men we adopt the latter course.

H.H. : Adopt the same course in every effort of yours. Exert yourself as much as you can. Your will must succeed in the end.

Function of Sastras:

D. : But there certainly are many things which are impossible to attain even after the utmost exertion.

H.H. : There you are mistaken. There is nothing which is really unattainable. A thing, however, may be unattainable to us at the particular stage at which we are, or with the qualifications that we possess. The attainability or otherwise of a particular thing is thus not an absolute characteristic of that thing but is relative and proportionate to our capacity to attain it.

D. : The success or failure of an effort can be known definitely only at the end. How are we then to know beforehand whether with our present capacity we may or may not exert ourselves to attain a particular object, and whether it is the right kind of exertion for the attainment of that object?

H.H. : Your question is certainly a pertinent one. The whole aim of our Dharma Sastras is to give a detailed answer to your question. Religion does not fetter man's free-will. It leaves him quite free to act, but tells him at the same time what is good for him and what is not. The responsibility is entirely and solely his. He cannot escape it by blaming fate, for fate is of his own making, nor by blaming God, for he is but the dispenser of fruits in accordance with the merits of actions. You are the

master of your own destiny. It is for you to make it, to better it or to mar it. This is your privilege. This is your responsibility.

D. : I quite realize this. But often it so happens that I am not really master of my actions. I know, for instance, quite well that a particular act is wrong; at the same time, I feel impelled to do it. Similarly, I know that another act is right; at the same time, however, I feel powerless to do it. It seems that there is some power which is able to control or defy my free-will. So long as that power is potent, how can I be called the master of my own destiny? What is that power but fate?

H.H. : You are evidently confusing together two distinct things. Fate is a thing quite different from the other one which you call a power. Suppose you handle an instrument for the first time. You will do it very clumsily and with great effort. The next time, however, you use it, you will do so less clumsily and with less effort. With repeated uses, you will have learnt to use it easily and without any effort. That is, the facility and ease with which you use a particular thing increase with the number of times you use it.

The first time a man steals, he does so with great effort and much fear; the next time both his effort and fear are much less. As opportunities increase, stealing will become a normal habit with him and will require no effort at all. This habit will generate in him a tendency to steal even when there is no necessity to steal. It is this tendency which goes by the name Vasana. The power which makes you act as if against your will is only the Vasana which itself is of your own making. This is not fate. The punishment or reward, in the shape of pain or pleasure, which is the inevitable consequence of an act, good or bad, is alone the province of fate or destiny. The Vasana which the doing of an act leaves behind in the mind in the shape of a taste, a greater facility or a greater tendency for doing the same act once again, is quite a different thing. It may be that the punishment or the reward of the

past act is, in ordinary circumstances, unavoidable, if there is no counter-effort; but the Vasana can be easily handled if only we exercise our free-will correctly.

D. : But the number of Vasanas or tendencies that rule our hearts are endless. How can we possibly control them?

H.H. : The essential nature of a Vasana is to seek expression in outward acts. This characteristic is common to all Vasanas, good and bad. The stream of Vasanas, the Vasana sarit, as it is called, has two currents, the good and the bad. If you try to dam up the entire stream, there may be danger. The Sastras, therefore, do not ask you to attempt that. On the other hand, they ask you to submit yourself to be led by the good Vasana current and to resist being led away by the bad Vasana current. When you know that a particular Vasana is rising up in your mind, you cannot possibly say that you are at its mercy. You have your wits about you and the responsibility of deciding whether you will encourage it or not is entirely yours. The Sastras enunciate in detail what Vasanas are good and have to be encouraged and what Vasanas are bad and have to be overcome. When, by dint of practice, you have made all your Vasanas good and practically eliminated the charge of any bad Vasanas leading you astray, the Sastras take upon themselves the function of teaching you how to free your free-will even from the need of being led by good Vasanas.

You will gradually be led on to a stage when your free-will be entirely free from any sort of coloring due to any Vasanas. At that stage, your mind will be pure as crystal and all motive for particular action will cease to be. Freedom from the results of particular actions is an inevitable consequence. Both fate and Vasana disappear. There is freedom for ever more and that freedom is called Moksha.

.. shrii shaN^karaarpaNamastu ..

Appendix E

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

CHAPTER 2 : STANZAS 54 TO 72

THE PERSON OF STEADY MIND

The woman of steady Wisdom

The characteristics of a self realized individual

(the Vedic Jeddi Knight)

This is a remarkable set of 18 stanzas which describes the person of steady wisdom. If detachment is one of the cardinal virtues, how is one to recognize the person who exhibits detachment (Vairagya). How does such a quality manifest itself (if at all) in the physical actions of such a person. How does such a person walk, and how does such a person sit, asks Arjuna with a somewhat incredulous tone, but at the same time eager to imbibe this knowledge. There is very little psycho babble here and can easily be followed by most of us.

अर्जुन उवाच

स्थितप्रज्ञस्य का भाषा समाधिस्थस्य केशव ।

स्थितधीः किं प्रभाषेत किमासीत व्रजेत किम् ॥

2,54

Bhagavad Gita 2.54

arjuna uvaca
sthita-prajnasya ka bhasa
samadhi-sthasya keshava
sthita-dhih kim prabhaseta
kim aasita vrajeta kim

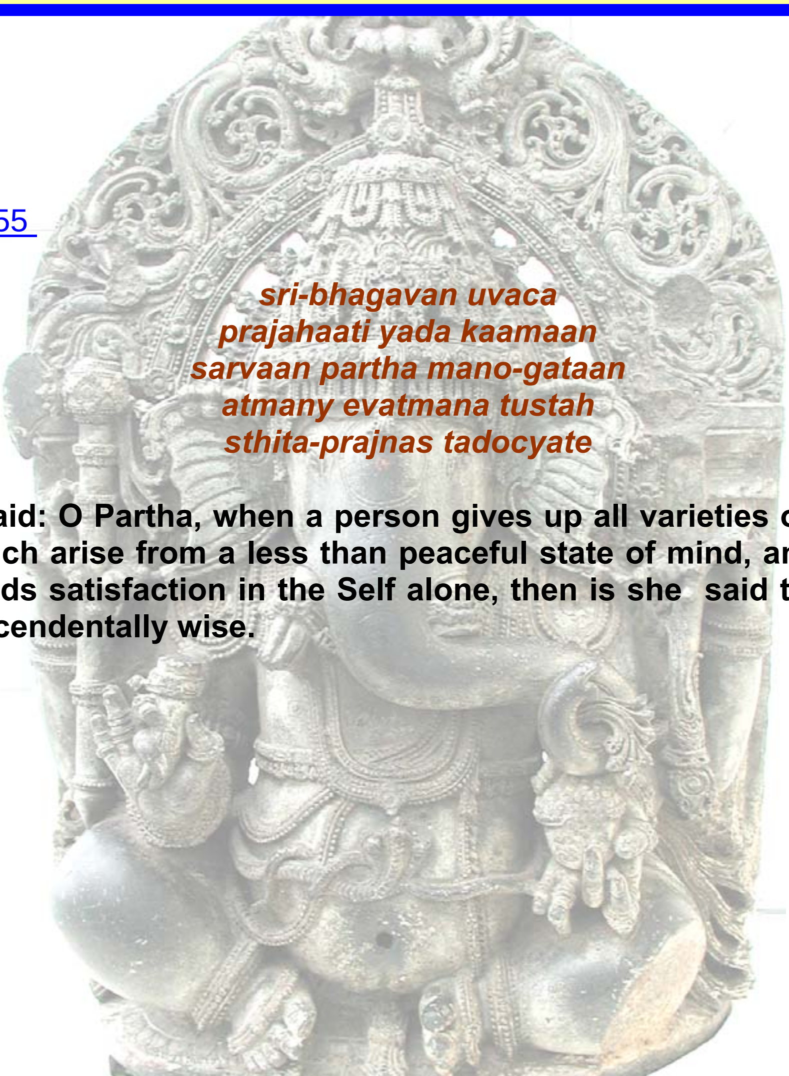
Arjuna seeks enlightenment: O Krishna, what distinguishes a person of steady wisdom, one whose consciousness is thus merged in transcendence? How does he speak, and what is his language? How does he sit, and how does he walk?"

श्रीभगवानुवाच

प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।

आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ।।

2,55



Bhagavad Gita 2.55

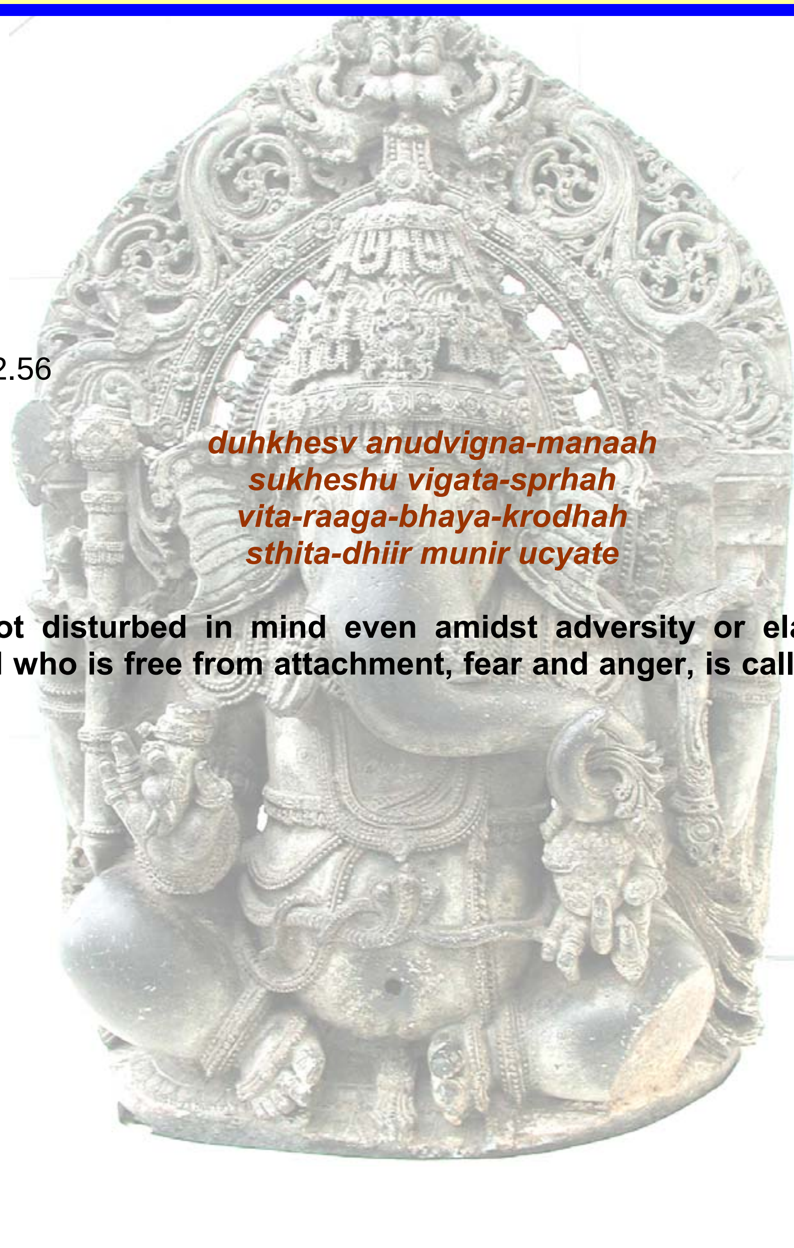
sri-bhagavan uvaca
prajahaati yada kaamaan
sarvaan partha mano-gataan
atmany evatmana tustah
sthita-prajnas tadocyate

Sri Bhagavan said: O Partha, when a person gives up all varieties of desire for sense gratification, which arise from a less than peaceful state of mind, and when her mind, thus purified, finds satisfaction in the Self alone, then is she said to be one stable in wisdom or transcendentally wise.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाःसुखेषु विगतस्पृहः।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ।।

2,56



Bhagavad Gita 2.56

duhkhesv anudvigna-manaah
sukheshu vigata-sprhah
vita-raaga-bhaya-krodhah
sthita-dhiir munir ucyate

One who is not disturbed in mind even amidst adversity or elated when there is happiness, and who is free from attachment, fear and anger, is called a sage of steady mind.

यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दति न द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।। 2,57

Bhagavad Gita 2.57

yah sarvatraanabhisnehas
tat tat prapya shubhaashubham
naabhinandati na dvesti
tasya prajnaa pratisthita

"In the material world, one who is unaffected by good fortune or misfortune, treating neither with elation nor dejection, is firmly fixed in perfect knowledge."

यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मोऽङ्गानीव सर्वशः।
इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।।

2,58

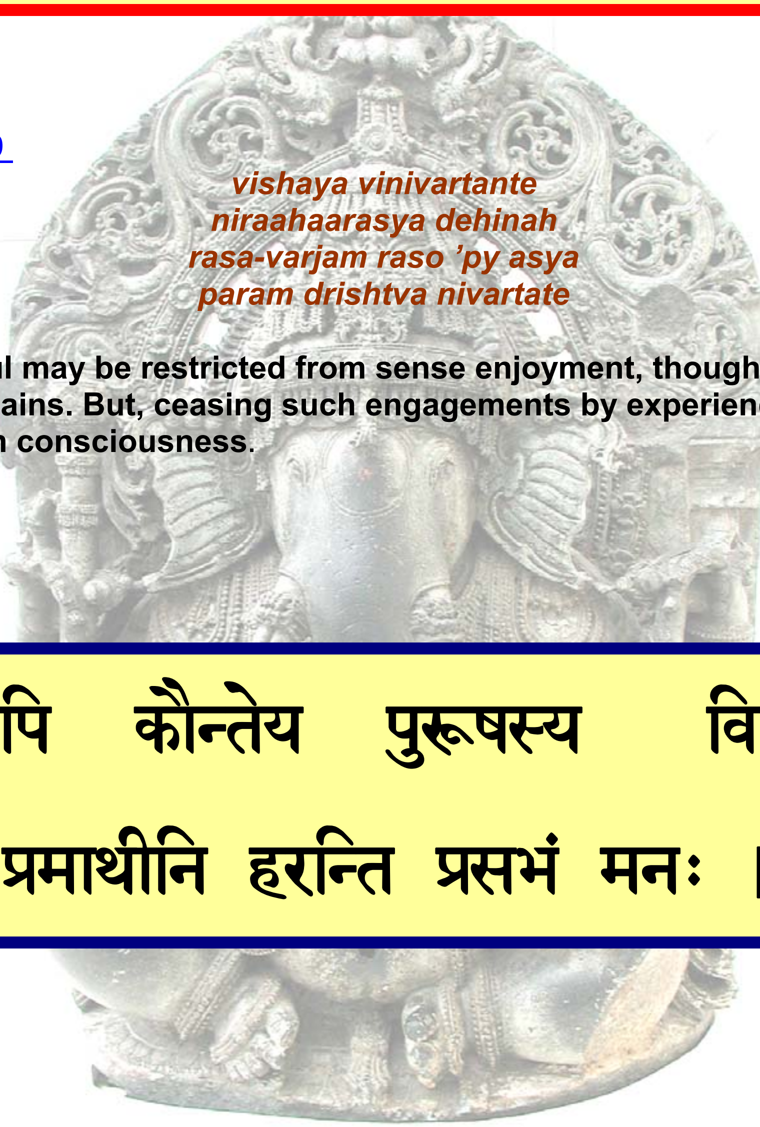
Bhagavad Gita 2.58

yada samharate chaayam
kuurmo ’ngaaniiva sarvasah
indriyaanindriyarthebhyas
tasya prajnaa pratisthita

One who is able to withdraw his senses from sense objects, as the tortoise draws its limbs within the shell, is firmly fixed in perfect consciousness.

विषया विनिवर्तन्त निराहारस्य देहिनः ।

रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ।। **2,59**



[Bhagavad Gita 2.59](#)

vishaya vinivartante
niraahaarasya dehinah
rasa-varjam raso 'py asya
param drishtva nivartate

The embodied soul may be restricted from sense enjoyment, though the taste for sense objects remains. But, ceasing such engagements by experiencing a higher taste, he is fixed in consciousness.

यततो ह्यपि कौन्तेय पुरूषस्य विपश्चितः ।

इन्द्रियाणि प्रमाथीनि हरन्ति प्रसभं मनः ।। **2,60**

Bhagavad Gita 2.60

yatato hy api kaunteya
purushasya vipascitah
indriyani pramathiini
haranti prasabham manah

The senses are so strong and impetuous, O Arjuna, that they forcibly carry away the mind even of a man of wisdom and discrimination who is endeavoring to control them."



तानि सर्वाणि संयम्य युक्त आसीत मत्परः ।
वशे हि यस्येन्द्रियाणि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।। 2,61

Bhagavad Gita 2.61

tani sarvaani samyamya
yukta aasita mat-parah
vashe hi yasyendriyani
tasya prajna pratisthita

One who restrains his senses, keeping them under full control, and fixes his consciousness upon Me, is known as a man of steady intelligence.

ध्यायतो वषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषूपजायते ।
सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ।।2,62

Bhagavad Gita 2.62

dhyaayato visayaan pumsah
sangas tesupajayate
sangaat sanjaayate kaamah
kaamaat krodho 'bhijaayate

While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment develops desire, and from desire springs anger.



क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्समृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ।। 2,63

Bhagavad Gita 2.63

krodhad bhavati sammohah
sammohat smriti-vibhramah

smriti-bhramsad buddhi-naso
buddhi-nasat pranasyati

From anger, arises delusion, and from delusion, loss of memory accompanied by bewilderment. When memory is thus impaired, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost, one perishes.

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ।। 2,64



Bhagavad Gita 2.64

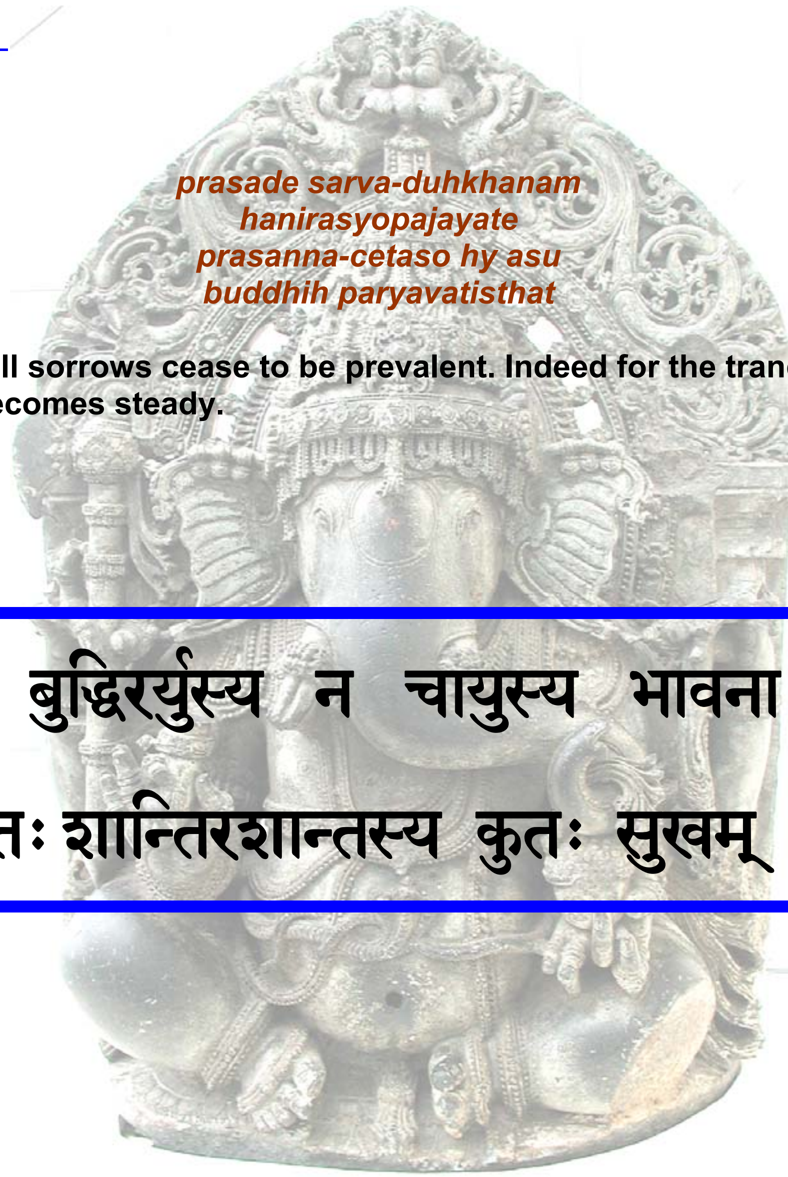
raga-dvesa-vimuktais tu
visayan indriyais caran
atma-vasyair vidheyatma
prasadam adhigacchati

But a person free from all attachment and aversion and able to control his senses using regulative principles of freedom can earn the complete grace of the Lord.

प्रसादे सर्वदु:खानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।

प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशु बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ।। 2,65

Bhagavad Gita 2.65



prasade sarva-duhkhanam
hanirasyopajayate
prasanna-cetaso hy asu
buddhih paryavatisthat

In tranquility, the all sorrows cease to be prevalent. Indeed for the tranquil minded, the intellect at once becomes steady.

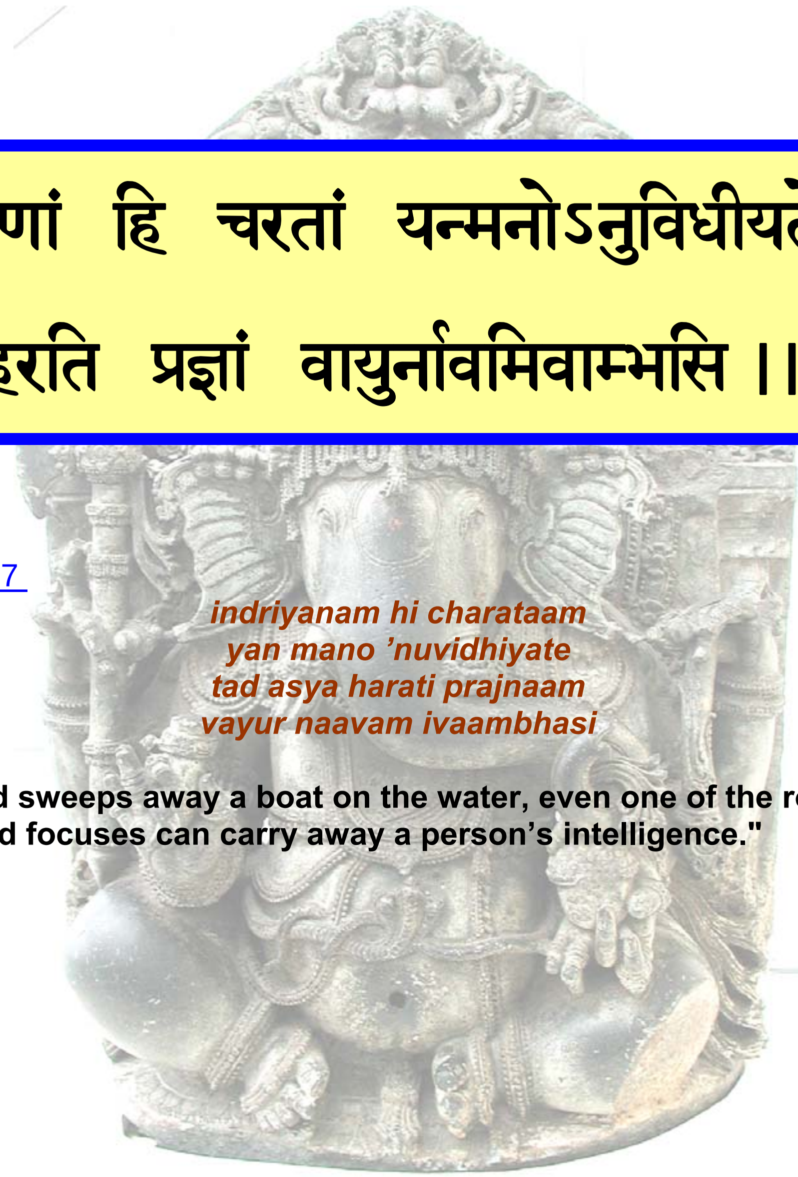
नास्ति बुद्धिरर्युस्य न चायुस्य भावना ।

न चाभावयतः शान्तिरशान्तस्य कुतः सुखम् ।।2.66

Bhagavad Gita 2.66

nasti buddhir ayuktasya
na cayuktasya bhavana
na cabhavayatah shantir
asantasya kutah sukham

One who is not connected with the Supreme can have neither transcendental intelligence nor a steady mind, without which there is no possibility of peace. And how can there be any happiness without peace?



इन्द्रियाणां हि चरतां यन्मनोऽनुविधीयते ।
तदस्य हरति प्रज्ञां वायुर्नावमिवाम्भसि ।। 2,67

Bhagavad Gita 2.67

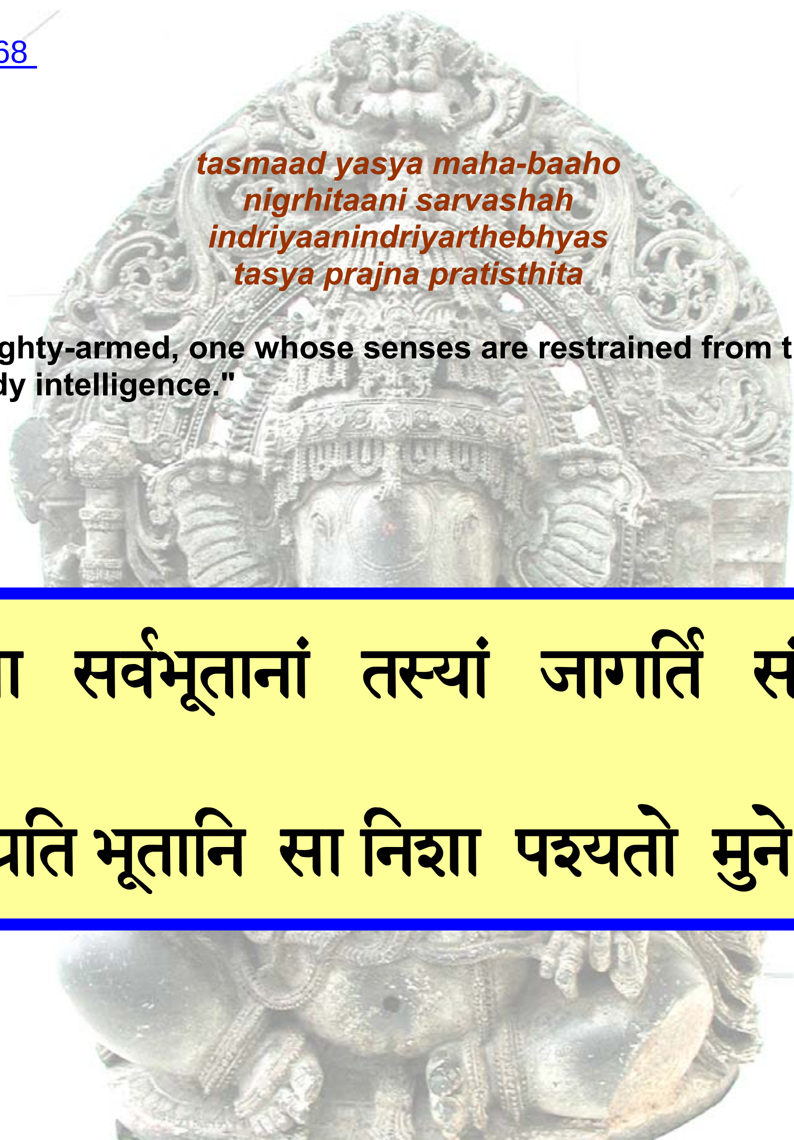
indriyanam hi charataam
yan mano ’nuvidhiyate
tad asya harati prajnaam
vayur naavam ivaambhasi

"As a strong wind sweeps away a boat on the water, even one of the roaming senses on which the mind focuses can carry away a person’s intelligence."

तस्माद्यस्य महाबाहो निगृहीतानि सर्वशः ।

इन्द्रियाणीन्द्रियार्थेभ्यस्तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठिता ।।2,68

Bhagavad Gita 2.68



tasmaad yasya maha-baaho
nigrhitaani sarvashah
indriyaanindriyarthebhyas
tasya prajna pratisthita

"Therefore, O mighty-armed, one whose senses are restrained from their objects is certainly of steady intelligence."

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ।।2,69

Bhagavad Gita 2.69

ya nisa sarva-bhutaanam
tasyaam jaagarti samyami
yasyaam jaagrati bhutaani
saa nisha pashyato muneh

What is night for all beings is the time of awakening for the self-controlled; and the time of awakening for all beings is night for the introspective sage.

आपूर्यमाणं अचलप्रतिष्ठं समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत्कामा यं विशन्ति सर्वे स शान्तिमाप्नोति न
कामकामी ।। 2,70

Bhagavad Gita 2.70

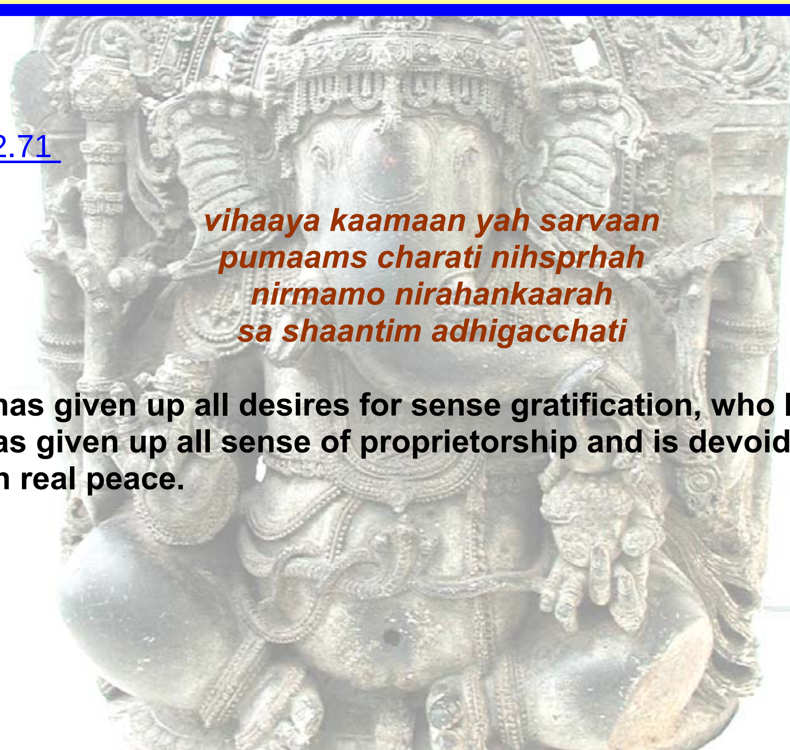
aapuryamaanam acala-pratishtham
samudram apah pravishanti yadvat
tadvat kama yam pravishanti sarve
sa shantim apnoti na kama-kami

A person who is not disturbed by the incessant flow of desires—that enter like rivers into the ocean, which is ever being filled but is always still—can alone achieve peace, and not the individual who strives to satisfy such desires.

विहाय कामान्यः सर्वान्पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ।।

2,71



Bhagavad Gita 2.71

vihaaya kaamaan yah sarvaan
pumaams charati nihsprhah
nirmamo nirahankaarah
sa shaantim adhigacchati

A person who has given up all desires for sense gratification, who lives free from desires, who has given up all sense of proprietorship and is devoid of false ego—she alone can attain real peace.

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ।

स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ।।

2,72

[Bhagavad Gita 2.72](#)

esa brahmi sthitih partha
nainam prapya vimuhyati
sthitvasyam anta-kale ’pi
brahma-nirvanam rcchati

That is the way of the spiritual and Dhaarmic life, after attaining which an individual is neither bewildered nor deluded. If one is thus situated even at the hour of death, one can attain the grace of Brahman"



इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे ।

श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः ।।

This is the end of Chapter II of the Bhagavad Gita Upanishad on Samkhya Yoga or Yoga of Knowledge, and forms part of the discourse between Sri Krishna and Arjuna on Brahma Vidya and Yoga sastra.

Attaining the status of a sthitha prajna is a key teaching of the Gita as well as being a key ingredient in the process of attaining Moksha.

The essential elements of an integrated life according to the Gita are as follows

Know the reality of the world we live in
Know the reality of one self and the relationship of the self with the supreme spirit or Brahman
Know the causes of instability of the mind, keeping in mind the goal of stability of the mind or equanimity (the key to the ultimate goal of realization of Brahman or realization of the supreme self)
Nurture the practice of true knowledge (pAra vidya) , of discrimination (Viveka) and of detachment (vairagya)
While action is important and needed for survival and prosperity it is the spirit of the action and the manner in which it Is invoked that is key to remaining unbound to the action by expectations and desires.
Know the nature of the Supreme Self and identify ones own Atman with Brahman
Know the true nature of devotion, surrender and sacrifice

Notes



,, 68 ,,

प्रज्ञा - बुद्धि - knowledge

प्रतिष्ठिता - स्थिर होती है - is steady

हे महाबाहो इसलिए जिस पुरुष की इन्द्रियां सब प्रकार इन्द्रियों के विषयों से वश में की हुई होती है उसकी बुद्धि स्थिर होती है,

Therefore, O mighty armed one (Arjuna), he, whose senses are completely restrained from their objects, is said to be of steady knowledge. (68)

,, 69 ,,

या - जो - which

निशा - रात्रि - night

सर्वभूतानाम् - सब प्राणियों के - of all beings

तस्याम् - उसमें - in that

जागर्ति - जागता है - wakes

संयमी - योगी पुरुष - the self controlled

यस्याम् - जिसमें - in which

जाग्रति - जागते हैं - wake

भूतानि - सब प्राणी - all beings

सा - वह - that

निशा - रात्रि - night

पश्यतः - तत्व को जाननेवाले - of the seeing

मुनेः - मुनि की - of the Seer

जो समस्त प्राणियों की रात्रि है उसमें योगी पुरुष जागता है और जिसमें समस्त प्राणी जागते हैं वह तत्व को जाननेवाले मुनि की रात्रि है,

That which is night to all beings, is the the time when the self-controlled one is awake. And that which is day when all beings are awake, is night to the seer. (69)

„ 70 „

आपूर्यमाणम् - सब ओर से परिपूर्ण - filled from all sides

अचलप्रतिष्ठम् - अचल प्रतिष्ठावाले - unaltered

समुद्रम् - समुद्र के प्रति - ocean

आपः - जल - waters

प्रविशन्ति - समा जाते हैं - enter

यद्वत् - जैसे - as

तद्वत् - वैसे - so

कामाः - भोग - desires

यम् - जिस - whom

प्रविशन्ति - समा जाते हैं - enter

सर्वे - सम्पूर्ण - all

सः - वह - he

शान्तिम् - शान्ति को - peace

आप्नोति - प्राप्त होता है - attains

न - न कि - not

कामकामी - भोगों को चाहनेवाला - seeker of desires

जैसे सब ओर से परिपूर्ण अचल प्रतिष्ठावाले समुद्र के प्रति नाना नदियों के जल समा जाते हैं वैसे ही जिस स्थिरबुद्धि पुरुष के प्रति सम्पूर्ण भोग समा जाते हैं वह पुरुष परम शान्ति को प्राप्त होता है न कि भोगों को चाहनेवाला ,

As the waters of different rivers enter it from all sides, the ocean remains unaltered, likewise, he who remains unmoved by pleasures, remains at peace; not he who hankers after pleasures. (70)

,, 71 ,,

विहाय - त्यागकर - abandoning

कामान् - कामनाओं को - desires

यः - जो - that

सर्वान् - सब - all

पुमान् - पुरुष - man

चरति - विचरता है - moves about

निःस्पृहः - स्पृहारहित - free from longing

निर्ममः - ममतारहित - devoid of ownership

निरहंकारः - अहंकाररहित - without egoism

सः - वह - he

शान्तिम् - शान्ति को - to peace

अधिगच्छति - प्राप्त होता है - attains

जो पुरुष सब कामनाओं को त्यागकर ममतारहित अहंकाररहित और स्पृहारहित होकर विचरता है वह शान्ति को प्राप्त होता है,

He who has given up all desires, and moves free from attachment, egoism and thirst for enjoyment, attains peace. (71)

एषा ब्राह्मी स्थितिः पार्थ नैनां प्राप्य विमुह्यति ,

स्थित्वास्यामन्तकालेऽपि ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृच्छति ,, 72 ,,

एषा - यह - this

ब्राह्मी - ब्रह्म को प्राप्त हुए पुरुष की - of the Brahman

स्थितिः - स्थिति है - state

पार्थ - हे पार्थ - O Partha

न - नही - not

एनाम् - इसको - this

प्राप्य - प्राप्त होकर - having obtained

विमुह्यति - मोहित होता है - is deluded

स्थित्वा - स्थित होकर - being established

अस्याम् - इस स्थिति में - in this

अन्तकाले - अन्तकाल में - at the end of life

अपि - भी - even

ब्रह्मनिर्वाणम् - ब्रह्मानन्द को - oneness with Brahman

ऋच्छति - प्राप्त हो जाता है - attains

हे पार्थ यह ब्रह्म को प्राप्त हुए पुरुष की स्थिति है इसको प्राप्त होकर मोहित नही होता है और अन्तकाल में भी इस स्थिति में स्थित होकर ब्रह्मानन्द को प्राप्त हो जाता है ,

O Partha (Arjuna), such is the Brahmic state, and he who has reached this state, overcomes delusion. And established in this state, even at the last moment of his life, he attains to Brahman. (72)

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतासूपनिषत्सु ब्रह्मविद्यायां योगशास्त्रे श्रीकृष्णार्जुनसंवादे सांख्ययोगो नाम द्वितीयोऽध्यायः

इति - इति - thus runs

श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता - श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता - Srimad Bhagavad Gita

उपनिषत्सु - उपनिषद् में - Upanishad

ब्रह्मविद्यायां - ब्रह्मविद्या में - Knowledge of Brahman

योगशास्त्रे - योगशास्त्र में - Science of Yoga

श्रीकृष्णअर्जुन - श्रीकृष्ण और अर्जुन - Krishna and Arjuna

संवादे - सम्वाद में - dialogue

सांख्ययोगो - सांख्ययोग - Sankhya Yoga

नाम - नामक - named

द्वितीयोऽध्यायः - दूसरा अध्याय - the Second Chapter

इति श्रीमद्भगवद्गीतारूपी उपनिषद् एवं ब्रह्मविद्या तथा

योगशास्त्रविषयक श्रीकृष्ण और अर्जुन के

सम्वाद में सांख्ययोग नामक

दूसरा अध्याय

Thus in the Upanishad of the Bhagavad Gita presenting the Knowledge of Brahma and the Science of Yoga in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krsna and Arjuna, runs the second Chapter entitled The Yoga of Sankhya

Appendix F

Caste

FAQ on Caste

What is the situation regarding the Caste system in Hindu society? Was such a system endorsed by the ancient Vedics in any of the scriptures? Did the Hindu scriptures endorse Untouchability?

The short answer is that such a system was not endorsed by the ancient scriptures and that the Hindu scriptures certainly never endorsed Untouchability. It is therefore a facile assumption which even significant proportions of Hindus make that the Hindu belief system sanctions all of the behavior patterns that occur under the rubric of the term 'Caste'. In reality it is safe to say that the resulting exploitation of economically disadvantaged sections of society by their fellow human beings has no sanction in any of the scriptures of the Sanatana Dharma. People sometimes behave contrary to the tenets of the faith they profess. This occurs in every society of the world. The incidence of such behavior relative to the population is below that of most other countries which report incidences of sectarian and ethnic violence

and is well within the 6 sigma limits of statistics[3], which would classify it as statistically insignificant behavior. We would like to see this number to be 0, but human nature being what it is; we are unlikely to see a zero number achieved in the near future.

In what follows, it is not our intention to defend the caste system. Merely to point out that it does not have a basis in our ancient traditions.

Why do we say that exploitation of fellow human beings is not sanctioned in the scripture? In order to answer this we will answer the next question which is.

What is Varna? What is the Varna Ashrama System? What is the Guna Varna Vyavastha?

The Varna Ashrama system comprises of 2 basic concepts of Varna and Ashrama. The Varna system, namely Guna Varna Vyavastha that produced the Varnashrama Dharma was conscious of the fact that this was the world's early attempt at a division of labor

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[3] The Term Six Sigma , Sigma (the lower-case Greek letter "s") is used to represent standard deviation (a measure of variation) of the target population (whereas lower-case ess, 's', represents standard deviation of the sample). The term "six sigma" comes from the notion that if you have six standard deviations between the mean result of a process and the nearest specification limit, you will make practically no items that exceed the specifications. This is the basis for the process capability study, often used by quality professionals, and the term "Six Sigma" has its roots in this too

based on aptitudes. In short, the system was a synonym for a meritocracy[4]. That the system was eminently successful in its own way , I have no doubt because the resulting civilization flourished for well over 5 millennia, until its very foundations were attacked by barbarians from both within and without ,barbarians, whose notion of entertainment was to build a pyramid of skulls, in order to terrorize the local population to capitulate. The current system in place after the colonial power was done reinventing and reshaping it to its own specifications, and which goes by the name Caste, is so utterly different in all significant ways, that we can safely say it has little to do with the Hindu faith or Hindu traditions such as the Guna Varna Vyavastha. The Vedic division of people into 4 Varnas (Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaisya and Shudra) is by Guna and Guna only and is known as the Guna Varna Vyavastha. The Asrama system refers to the four stages of one's life, namely Brahmacharya (life of an unmarried student), Grihasthya (life of a householder), Vanaprasthaya (life of a retired householder), sannyasa (life of a monk) is based in the physical, mental and emotional changes that take place in a person as he/she ages and matures.

What are the GuNAs

There are 3 GuNAs as we have explained elsewhere (see Glossary), Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and these three GuNAs occur in each and every individual in varying degrees. The relative proportion of each in the total determines the essential nature of the individual. It follows that at any given time an individual, may exhibit different modes of behavior as his personality matures and develops. The son of a Brahmana may choose not to follow the priestly vocation and may elect to go into law. As a

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[4] See Wiki, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meritocracy

general rule of thumb one elects to be in a profession which utilizes his GuNAs fully. For example Brahmanas tend to cluster around intellectual pursuits (teaching, legal, corporate management, administration etc. In the past the choice of professions available to Brahmanas were limited to priestly duties and the services he could render as a Minister to the Maharaja including mundane tasks such as accounting and cooking. In recent years substantial numbers of Brahmanas faced with increasing discrimination from their own government have elected to go into Business, so that his varna is that of a Vaisya, unless he maintains his competency and knowledge of the Vedic scripture and adheres to the injunctions of a Brahmana

Since there are three guNAs, why are there four varNAs?

The GuNa Varna Vyavastha arose out of the propensity of individuals to exhibit a dominant GuNa or GuNAs, rather than an equal distribution of all three. If all individuals had only one guNa in them, then it would be logical to conclude that there can be only 3 varNAs. But this is not so. The mapping between GuNAs and Varna is not one to one .These 3 guNAs are found in 'varying degrees' in all individuals, be they Indian, American or British. So the ancient seers made a broader classification of the individuals based on the guNAs present in them. See the exposition by Sri Krishna in Chapter 18, verses 18-40, on the GuNAs that the various Varnas should exhibit in order to qualify as a member of a particular Varna. Note that it is not the case that the Brahmanas and Kshatriyas are not subsets of the other two. Each Varna possesses a mix of GuNAs which while not being mutually exclusive, and while having a degree of overlap, have distinctive characteristics as is to be expected if it was a division of labor which we emphatically believe to be the case

The guNAs present in individuals fall under the various varNAs in the order of predominance as follows:

Brahmana: Sattva-->rajas
Kshatriya - rajas-->Sattva-->Tamas
Vaisya - rajas-->Tamas-->Sattva
Shudra - Tamas

In other words, one cannot term himself a Brahmana or a Sudra unless the person is endowed the right characteristics. This is not the situation today where the caste system is primarily an ethnic classification with racial connotations

Can you give references to the occurrences off the Guna Varna Vyavastha in the Sruti?

Let us look at a few examples to see what the scriptures say.

The following verse in the Rg. Mandala X, hymn 90-11, is usually quoted, to bolster the assertion that the caste system is sanctioned by the Vedas. This is what the verse actually says

ब्राह्मणो.अस्य मुखमासीद बाहू राजन्यः कर्तः |

ऊरू तदस्य यद वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत || X,90-11

brāhmano.asya mukhamāsīd bāhū rājanyaha kartaha | ūrūtadasya yad vaiśyaha padbhyāha śūdro ajāyata ||

This verse is usually translated into English as follows

The Brahmana was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made. His thighs became the Vaisya; from his feet the Sudra was produced.

The verse also occurs in the Yajurveda, 31.11

But, what is this meant to convey. It is actually an answer to the previous verse which asks the following question

यत पुरुषं वयदधुः कतिधा वयकल्पयन | मुखं किमस्य कौ बाहू का ऊरू पादा उच्येते || X,90-10

When they divided Purusa how many portions did they make? What do they call his mouth, his arms? What do they call his thighs and feet?

These verses are from the famous Purusa Suktam , the hymn in praise of the cosmic Purusa or the cosmic self (Viraat Purusa) and it is an analogy between the

limbs of the cosmic self and the occupations in each of the varnas based on their mix of GuNAs. In the first verse of the Purusa Suktam the gigantic being that comprises the cosmic self is described as having a thousand heads, thousand eyes and a thousand feet. It is clearly a metaphor for the Viraat Purusa (VP). There is no reference to his arms. The VP is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent. There is also the clear implication of interdependence between the various parts of the cosmic self. No (wo) man is an Island unto himself and specialization of skills leads to division of Labor where every one in theory does what he or she is best suited for. In this Indic societies were and are no different from other societies in the west where the son of a blacksmith almost always opted to become a Blacksmith.

It is by no means an endorsement of a hereditary caste system based on race, as the question of race rarely enters into the discourse anywhere in the Gita. There is a clear implication that within the same person there dwells the tendency to be any one of the Castes depending on the stage in one's life and the circumstances and challenges faced by the individual at various stages on one's life. Hindu Renaissance has brought out a special issue on the topic which takes a parallel view of the topic.[5]

[5] The Hindu Renaissance; Issues of jati and Varna, Vol.4, no.2, Varshapratipada Yugabda 5108

The use of analogy is termed UpamAna in Sanskrit epistemology. It is one of the six instruments of the mind used to gather pAra Vidya. Clearly the analogy has failed in its purpose which was to educate the public on the role of guNAs in the 'division of labor' paradigm as embodied in the Varna Ashrama system, and it is probably time to discard such an analogy which does not fit with the politically correct temper of the times. But merely because it is politically incorrect is hardly reason enough to misinterpret it as a system based on Race as the British did with the obvious motive of driving a divisive wedge in the society and make their own job of ruling autocratically all the more easier. Thus it was, and the evident glee with which the British went about embellishing and reinventing the Caste system is obvious for all to read Equally obvious is the fact that they would not have succeeded if there was no exploitation of weaker sections of society by fellow human beings.

There are several points to note about the verse

1. The tenth Mandala of the Rg. was probably the last one written, even though it is generally accepted that the Mandalas are not in chronological order. Despite that the antiquity of the Rg. according to astronomical dating is circa 5000 BCE. Vedantic ideas had not evolved as yet, as exemplified in the Brahma sutras. The concept of Purusha (as opposed to Prakriti the material universe) was the first glimpse of an ontological principle at work.

2. This is probably the first evidence of an organized division of Labor based on aptitudes. In other words it was a meritocracy. It was not intended to be a hereditary system. The system unfortunately degraded into a hereditary system.

Sudra; This (in the Purusha Suktam) is probably the first occurrence o f the word Shudra in the Sruti

Shudra or Sudra is the fourth varna (See Appendix H, the glossary) in the traditional four section division of labor in Indic society. Their assigned and expected role of the Sudra in Vedic India was that of artisans and laborers. The four varnas are Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, (see Glossary) and Shudra. Whilst the origins of the other varnas can be traced to Indo-Iranian or even Proto Indo-European words, the root of the word Sudra is not clear at all. A threefold division of societies can be found in ancient Iran that matches the Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya varnas. Although linguistically related Nuristani people in neighboring Afghanistan have a class equivalent to the Shudras amongst them. It has been proposed ,mistakenly it turns out that the Shudras were same as Dasas and Dahyus, who are portrayed as enemies of the Aryans in the Vedas, and who it is said were enslaved by the Aryans. But the latter groups are also encountered in the Avestan texts and no subjugation is mentioned, though enmity is. The ancient texts of India betray no such subjugation by conquest resulting in servile group of people, but merely assume that the Shudras are part of society, even if not the most exalted. There is no

etymology of the word Sudra as well; it just emerges suddenly in the Purusa Suktam of Rig veda. The numerical strength of this varna is also not clear from the Vedic corpus as tasks attributed to Shudras later are done by Vaisyas in the era represented by these texts.

Bhagavan Sri Krishna takes responsibility for the creation of the 4 Varnas according to a person's relative mix of GuNAs

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्ध्यकर्तारमव्ययम् ।। 4,13

,

Chaturvarnyam maya srshtamGuna karma vibhagha saha I

Tasya kartAramapimAm, VdyakartAram avyayam II

चातुर्वर्ण्यम् - चारों वर्ण - the fourfold caste

मया - मेरे द्वारा - by me

सृष्टम् - रचे गये हैं - has been created

गुणकर्मविभागशः- गुण और कर्मों के अनुसार- according to their qualities and skills

तस्य - उनके - thereof

कर्तारम् - कर्ता को - the author

अपि - भी - also

माम् - मुझ - me

विद्धि - जान - know

अकर्तारम् - अकर्ता - passive

अव्ययम् - अविनाशी - immutable

गुण और कर्म के विभाग से चारों वर्ण (ब्राह्मण, क्षत्रिय, वैश्य,

शूद्र)

मेरे द्वारा रचे गये हैं , उनका कर्ता होने पर भी मुझ अविनाशी

परमेश्वर को तुम अकर्ता ही जान ,

The four orders of society (viz., the Brahman, the Kshatriya, the Vaisya and the Sudra) were created by Me, classifying them according to the qualities and skills,predominant in each and apportioning corresponding duties to them; thoughI am the author of this creation, know Me, the immortal Lord, to be passive and immutable. (4,13)

The following is a verse from the Rg. also, exemplifying the fact that different members of the same family pursued different professions and that there was no one to one mapping between Varna and professions

कारुरहं ततो भिषगुपलप्रक्षिणी नना ।
नानाधियोवसूयवो.अनु गा इव तस्थिमेन्द्रायेन्दो परि सरव ॥
Rg.IX,112,3

kāruraham tato bhishaghu palaprakshiNī nanā |
nānādhiyovasūyavo.anu ghā iva tasthimendrāyendo pari srava

I am a poet, my father is a physician, and my mother grinds corn on stone. Being engaged in different occupations, we seek wealth and happiness, as cows seek food in different pastures. May Thy bounties flow for our happiness, 0 God." We need not multiply quotations, as *even* European scholars now reluctantly admit that hereditary Castes did not exist in the Vedic era

Why is the Varna Ashrama System called a Caste System and is there a rational for calling it such ?

If there were not a multiplicity of Varnas in the ancient times,how did we end up having so many castes in the last 100 years

"The word caste is not a word that is indigenous to India. It originates in the

Portuguese word Casta which means race, breed, race or lineage. However, during the 19th century, the term caste increasingly took on the connotations of the word race6. Thus, from the very beginning of western contact with the subcontinent European constructions have been imposed on Indian systems and institutions. To fully appreciate the caste system one must step away from the definitions imposed by Europeans and look at the system as a whole, including the religious beliefs that are an integral part of it. To the British, viewing the caste system from the outside and on a very superficial level, it appeared to be a static system of social ordering that allowed the ruling class or Brahmins, to maintain their power over the other classes. What the British failed to realize was that Hindus existed in a different cosmological frame than did the British. .."

"Today, people think that the rigid caste system operated in India is the result of ancient requirements of religion. But just how much of this rigidity was due to their religion? Or how much was it due to a conscious direction by the British to create artificial divisions in order to make it easier to divide and rule the sub-continent and its people?"

"Moreover, as will be seen later in this paper, it appears that the caste system extant in the late 19th and early 20th century has been altered as a result of British actions so that it increasingly took on the characteristics that were ascribed to by the British." The 1901 census of India contains a wealth of detail that reflects some of the preoccupations of its age. It contains exhaustive treatments of issues related to population change and religion and civil condition and the other matters normally recorded in the census reports. A major

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[6] Kevin Hobson The Indian Caste System and The British - Ethnographic Mapping and the Construction of the British Census in India

introduction in this census report, not seen in the previous census reports, was the study of the "anthropometric" readings of racial characteristics which is introduced into its discussion of "Caste, Tribe, and Race" in chapter eleven of the work. There is also a very extensive discussion of the origins of caste in the census report which has provoked much controversy[7].

Sir Herbert Risley also wrote a major work on Indian Castes called The People of India which he published in 1908.

- **No indigenous equivalent to the word Caste in India. The English word Caste was derived from Portuguese word Casta which meant race, breed or lineage. Quite distinct from Varna**
- **The Brits institutionalized the word Caste, using the decennial Census of India as a tool for ethnographic mapping and conjured up 100's of new castes**
- **the Census acted as a catalyst for an increased consciousness of caste as caste status became an increasingly significant factor in attaining material status.**
- **See for instance Nicholas Dirks 'Castes of Mind'**

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[7] "In any case, the British administrators were, understandably overwhelmed by these figures and felt obliged to find a way to compartmentalize chunks of population into manageable groups. The most obvious way to do so was through the use of India's unique caste system "**Ethnographic Mapping and the Construction of the British Census in India Kevin Hobson**

This is a relatively charitable explanation. The more plausible one is that they needed an idea of the diversity of India in order to exploit it for the prolongation of their rule by use of an important dictum that went back to Roman times and to Julius Caesar, namely Divide et Impera (divide and rule).

Caste and the Colonialist Enterprise

Caste (as we experience it today in India) is neither an unchanged survival of ancient India nor a single system that reflects a core cultural value. Rather than a basic expression of Indian tradition, caste is a modern phenomenon – the product of a concrete historical encounter between India and British colonial rule

Nicholas Dirks Castes of Mind, Colonialism and the Making of Modern India

Herbert. H. Risley, Commissioner of the 1901 census, also bared his underlying British prejudices in an 1886 publication which stated that race sentiment, far from being:

a figment of the intolerant pride of the Brahman, rests upon a foundation of fact which scientific methods confirm, that it has shaped the intricate grouping of the caste system, and has preserved the Aryan type in comparative purity throughout Northern India.

The interesting inference we can make from this statement, is that while he brands the Brahmana as being intolerantly proud, he reveals his strong belief in the existence of an Aryan racial prototype. The zeal and efficacy with which the British segregated themselves from the middle class Indian for over a hundred

years, and the extraordinary extent to which they opposed democracy and free elections in India speaks louder than any words that they believed in the Caste system, and that they considered themselves to be part of the ruling caste[8]

Is the Guna Varna System a valid paradigm for the 21st century, and if so should we defend and retain it.

It is time to redefine it or better yet if possible, discard it altogether. I say so not because i deem the system to be devoid of the very qualities and virtues which have propelled its existence for several millennia but because it has become a source of divisiveness for the republic and a weapon in the hands of those who would like to see the extinction of the Dharma. It is best if there were no references to caste in any public document such as application forms for employment or loans, or any affirmative action based solely on caste. Given the dynamics of the social system as we inherited it from the British, and the entrenched vested interest (of those who oppose Hinduism) in its prolongation, this is unlikely to happen. Hence in all likelihood the system will limp along kept alive by bureaucrats, the Hinduphobics, rival

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[8] When you examine this statement,it reveals
1.Dislike of the Brahmana –that he is intolerantly proud (meaning the Brits whohad fcompletely segregated themselves into ghettos called cantonments, were the only ones entitled to be proud and intolerant). That such a dislike was propelled by the need of the colonial master to dethrone the existing elite of India , is indeed obvious today. Despite this glaring motive, the Indics of today by and large have accepted the British version of Indic history,and it would take a massive effort on the part of any Government to undo the resulting damage.
2.That he believes in the racial purity of the Aryan
3.That the caste system was based on race

theological camps and last but not least the communists to provide them a strawman to belabor.

What should be done about the Caste system , the terminology and the practice?

There is no question it should be discarded. It has neither traditional sanction in the Sruti, nor is it appropriate for our times.

Appendix G

Illustrations

Figure1 2000 Year old image of Lakshmi

from a gateway of a Buddhist stupa at Bharhut indicating her popularity amongst non Hindus too (from Devdutt Pattanaik “Lakshmi –the Goddess of Wealth and Fortune an Introduction, Vakils, Feffer and Simons, Mumbai,2003



Bharhut or Barhut, is a location in Madhya Pradesh, Central India, known for its famous Buddhist stupa. The Bharhut stupa may have been established by the Maurya king Asoka in the 3rd century BCE,

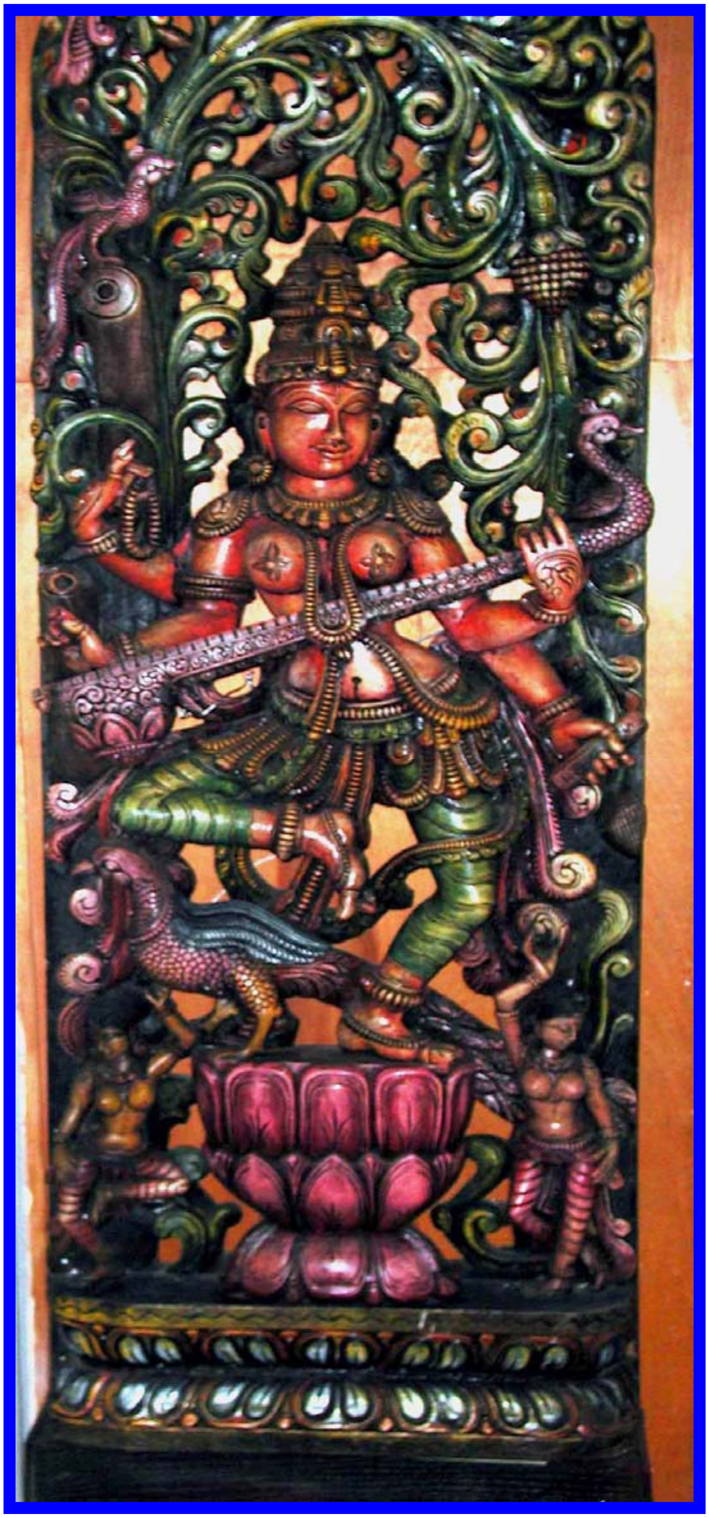


Figure 2

Sarasvati at Happy Valley





Figure 3

Vinayaka at

Happy Valley

Figure 4 Gayatri

(vide the well known Gayatri Mantra)



Figure 5 Varaha, the Boar Avatar of Vishnu

(from the Norton Simon Collection of Art from the Indian bcontinent)

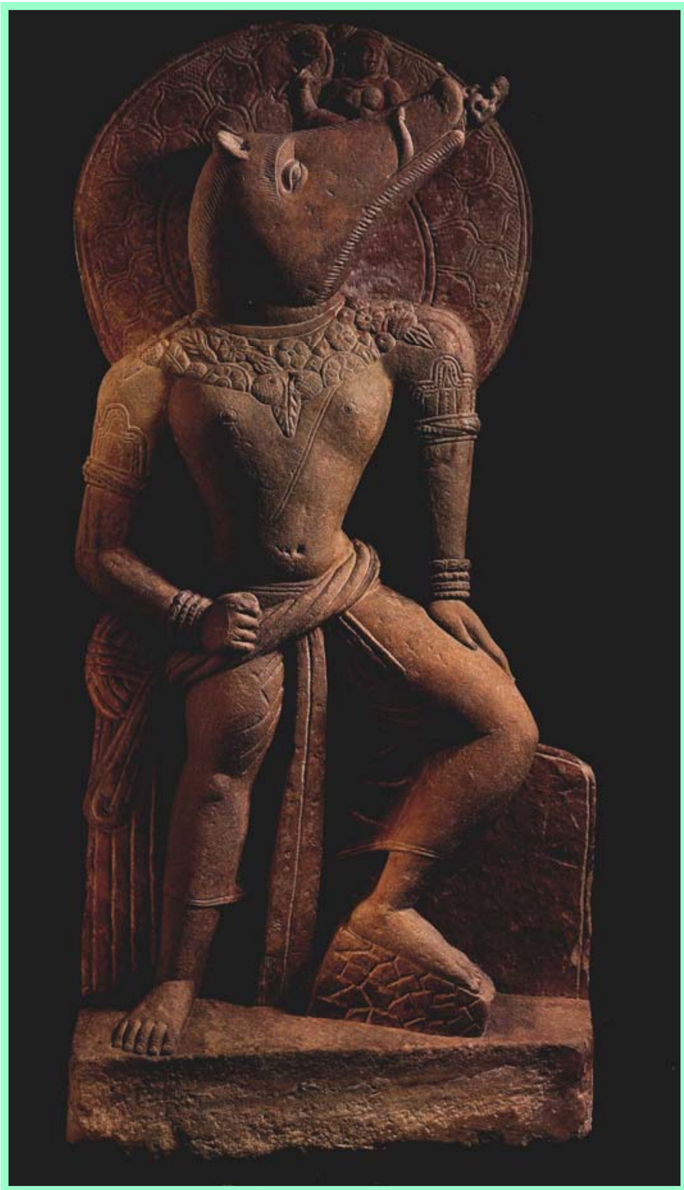




Figure 6 &7 Shiva and Parvati from Andhra Pradesh,circa 11th century CE.Bronze, 16”

This one is missing the figure of Skanda ttheir son ,synonymous with Kumara or Murugan as he is known in TN. These sculptures are known as Soma Skanda. This Sanskrit expression literally means Shiva with Uma and Skanda. Skanda is always shown as an infant or child. Ganesha their other son is never shown in this particular style of depiction.





Figure 7 Inset sculpture from Mahabalipuram,TN, India. Shiva and Parvati with Skanda. Also one can recognize Nandi the bull.

Dharmaraja Ratha:

It measures 29 by 27 by 35 feet and is shaped as a pyramid. Narasimha Varman I am considered by Hultzzen to be the author of this monument. The figures of Gods and men sculptured in the niches of the first three storeys of this Ratha, and the lonely words inscribed in bold and flowery letters, attract our attention.

The first floor of the Ratha contains the familiar Somaskandha group (Siva with Parvati and Subrahmanya). One special feature about the treatment of the figure of Parvati is that she is looking at Siva instead of at the spectator as in other similar groups. The external face of the Ratha holds in its rectangular niches images of divinities, some of which are unfinished and some unidentifiable.





Figure 8 & 9 Mahabalipuram



Figure 10 Mahabalipuram



Figure11 Avatars of Vishnu

Vaishnavite architectural arch, 59 inches, Rajasthan, India, 11th, 12th century

Appendix H

Glossary

Glossary of Sanskrit and Indic terms and phrases

No.	Word or phrase	Meaning
1	Abhijit, अभिजित	Abhijit Nakshatra: Abhijit Nakshatra is called the intercalary(IC) Nakshatra as it appear as a small (smaller duration as compared to normal duration of Nakshatra 13d 20m) Nakshatra between Uttarashadha and Sravana. The duration of Uttarashadha is divided into four parts and the first three paadas are assigned to Uttarashadha, which makes the duration of Uttarashadha to be 10deg with each paada to be 2d 30m. The remaining one paada of Uttarashadha is assigned to Abhijit, the intercalary Nakshatra. Similarly beginning 1/15th part of Sravana is given to Abhijit, making its total length to be 253.33 min, i.e., 4d 13m 20s. The remaining 14/15th part of Sravana is assigned to the four padas of Sravana, making the total duration of Sravana to be 12d 26m 40s
2	Acharya,आचार्य	a spiritual guide or teacher. See Sankaracharya
3	Adharma,अधर्म	absence of righteousness,edisorder,,evil,immorality
4	Adi,आदि	first, primordial as in Adi Sankara
5	Aditi, आदिति	In Hinduism, Aditi (Sanskrit - limitless) is a goddess of the sky, consciousness, the past, the future and fertility. She is an ancient goddess, mother of Agni and the Adityas with Kashyapa. She is associated with cows, a very holy animal in Hindu beliefs. Aditi is the

		daughter of Daksha and Veerni. She gave birth to the Devas who were beautiful, intelligent and pious to the Almighty.Although the goddess aditi is mentioned nearly eighty times in the rg-veda, it is difficult to get a clear picture of her nature. she is usually mentioned alongwith other gods and goddesses, there is no one hymn addressed exclusively to her, and unlike many other vedic deities, she is not obviously related to some natural phenomenon. compared to usas and prithvi, her character seems ill defined. she is virtually featureless physically. perhaps the most outstanding attribute of aditi is her motherhood. she is preeminently the mother of the adityas, a group of 7 or 8 gods which include mitra, aryaman, bhaga, varuna, daksha and ams. (2.27.1) aditi is also said to be the mother of the great god indra, the mother of kings (2.27), and the mother of gods (1.113.19). unlike prithvi, however, whose motherhood is also central to her nature, aditi does not have a male consort in the rg-veda. as a mothering presence, aditi is often asked to guard the one who petitions her (1.106.7 ; 8.18.6) or to provid
6	Aditya, आदित्य	In Hinduism, the Adityas are a group of solar deities, sons of Aditi and Kashyapa. In the Rigveda, they are seven deities of the heavens, chief of these being Varuna, followed by Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Daksha, and Ansa, the seventh Aditya was probably the Sun, Surya or Savitar. As a class of gods, the Rigvedic Adityas were distinct from the Vishvedevas. In the Yajurveda (Taittariya Samhita), their number is given as eight. In the Brahmanas, their number is expanded to twelve, corresponding to the twelve months:Ansa ,Aryman, Bhaga ,Daksha ,Dhatri, Indra, Mitra, Ravi, Savitar, Surya , Varuna, Yama Aditya in the (Chāndogya-Upanishad) is also a name of Vishnu, in his Vamana (dwarf) Avatar.Dictionary of Hindu Lore and Legend (ISBN 0500510881) by Anna Dhallapiccola
7	adhyasa,अद्यासा	used to refer to the 'mistake' that we make when we 'superimpose' a false appearance upon the reality or mix up the real and the unreal.
8	adrishta	opposite of drishta or Unseen,a metaphor for the consequences of past actions,which may be unanticipated
9	advaita,अद्वैत	not two (dvaita)
10	Agama,आगाम	Ancient Sanskrit religious text
11	Ahimsa,अहिम्स	abstention from injury to all life forms
12	amAvasya, अमावस्य़	new moon
13	AnumAna, अनुमान	anumaana or inference is one of the most importrant contributions of the system of metaknowledge known as Nyaya (which translates as Logic)

14	Apastambha अपस्तम्भ	Apastambha was an ancient Vedic savant ,who composed the Sulvasutra named after him, credited with approximation for square root of two. His goal was among others to design ritual altars and to conform to the rules of Vastu Sastra,circa 2500 BCE. Apastambha predates Aryabhatta since Aryabhatta refers to the Sulvasutras in his magnum opus Aryabhattium
15	Artha, अथ्र	Object, purpose, aim, significance, import. Attainment of worldly riches, prosperity, wealth, one of the goals of life prescribed by the Vedics in the Brahma Vidya
16	Arjava, आर्जव	straightforwardness at all times
17	Aryabhatta, आर्यभठ	ancient Indian mathematician the astronomer laureate of India , who lived in the Post Vedic period. His dating is controversial but could be as early as 2500 BCE and if so is contemporaneous with Babylonian mathematicians, see Aryabhatta I
18	Arya,आर्य	is an adjective, meaning noble such as in Arya Putr, noble son or noble prince
19	Aryan,आर्यन	A term connoting the fictitious Aryan race, see also Vedics, should not be used synonymously with Aryan which has a racial connotation. Arya is purely a behavioral adjective and nothing more.
20	Aryan Race	A fictitious classification without any scientific basis used by the Europeans to distinguish themselves from the semitic speaking people of the world. A word that has been foisted upon the Vedics who used the adjective Arya meaning of noble behavior. there was no racial connotation as there is now in Europe
21	Avidya, अविद्य	the state of ignorance which needs to be dispelled at the outset , before one can begin the journey in earnest towards self fulfillment and Moksha. 'Ignorance is bliss ' or so the satire goes. Ignorance most certainly is not bliss. It is one of the greatest sins a Hindu can commit. Avidya (pAra or apAra) is an unpardonable excuse and as soon as a person determines he/she is in a state of Avidya, they should take steps to remedy the situation
22	Bhakti Yoga, भक्ति	An approach to worship and spiritual practice in the Hindu tradition characterized by personal devotion to a divinity , often mediated by a holy person or teacher somewhat akin to the relationship with Christ among certain sects and adherents of Christianity
23	Bhartrihari, भर्तरिहरि	Bhartrihari along with Panini and Patanjali who preceded him by several centuries is regarded as one of the main contrbutors to the field of linguistics in ancient India. He introduced the notion of shabda tattwa or shabda pramaanam, namely "the notion of the originary word (shabda) as transcending the bounds of spoken and written language and meaning. Understood as shabda tattva-the "word principle," this complex idea explains the nature of consciousness, the awareness of all forms of phenomenal appearances, and posits an identity obtains between these, which is none other than Brahman. It is thus language as a fundamentally ontological principle that accounts for how we are able to conceptualize and communicate the awareness of objects. The metaphysical notion of

		shabda Brahman posits the unity of all existence as the foundation for all linguistically
24	BhAshya, भाश्य	Designated individual phenomena"Commentary on a celebrated or scriptural work (e.g. Adi Sankara's BhAshya on the Bhagavad Gita)
25	Brahmacharya	or student life,when a boy lives with his teacher(Guru) and receives both religious and secular instruction.The youth is trained in self control, and acquires such virtiues as chastity, truthfulness, faith, and self surrender
26	Brahmana,ृाह्मण (the correct pronounciation includes a short 'a' vowel at the end, the first 'a' is a long vowel while the second is a short one	One who attains Brahman is a BrAhmana - Brahavit Brahaiva bhavati - is the sruti and is the strict definition of a Brahmana.In this day and age it is dfficult to fathom in a short period of time whether a particular person has realized Brahman or not . In such a circumstance one looks for adherence to the ethical values of the Hindu and whether the person has the qualities mentioned therein. One of the 4 varnas of society possessing a predominantly sattvic guna amongst the three gunas (Traigunya) rajas,tamas and satvaThe Sanaatana Dharma is a meritocracy and recognizes everybody is not capable of meeting the same challenges. It is not a one size fits all ideology. The Dharma also recognizes there is diversity in the human species that not everybody can become a doctor or a a star football player and that the person by reason of his gunas may not have the inclination, fortitude and desire to put in the long years of training necessary to become a doctor. These differences are not necessarily related to ones appearance or even heredity but have to do with whether a person has the discipline, the single minded focus and fortitude to undertake the arduous task of becoming a doctor or a vedic priest or a star football player. Ev
27	Brahmana,ृाह्मण	texts associated with each Veda
28	Brahmavidya,ृमि वद्य	Brahmavidya or Paravidya (metaphysics metaknowledge or higher knowledge) is the vehicle for attaining Moksha in the path known as Jnana Yoga and Yogasastra(the means to attain the same) is the practical discipline needed to attain Brahmavidya
29	Brahminism	Brahminism is an ersatz terminology used to describe Sanatana Dharma that has become popular in certain circles in the west. It is clear that the Dharma is a whole family of beliefs and darshanas. It has been thus since a very long time. The vedic texts have survived several millennia of wars and natural disasters, but it is quite possible other texts have been lost. It has never been the contention of hindus that the Vedas are the only canon to have originated in the Indian subcontinent . But it is clear that they are among the few to survive over the millennia. Furthermore the implication that Brahmanas had exclusive control over the content and practice of the faith is demeaning and insulting to the Sanatana Dharma which has had a longline of Rishis and Sages who have expounded on the faith few of whom have been Brahmanas. Belief systems that did not subscribe to the Vedic canon have been extant for a very long time and have been known as Nastik Dharmas and include among others Charvaka , Jainism and Buddhism. It is therefore unnecessary to invent a new word Brahminism to describe an ancient faith

		which has a perfectly good name namely Sanatana Dharma. To use the word Rabbi-ism to describe the faith taught in Synagogues simp
30	**Brahmi script ब्रःमि**	**Brahmi is a "syllabic alphabet", meaning that each sign can be either a simple consonant or a syllable with the consonant and the inherent vowel /a/. Other syllabic alphabets outside of South Asia include Old Persian and Meroïtic. However, unlike these two system, Brahmi (and all subsequent Brahmi-derived scripts) indicates the same consonant with a different vowel by drawing extra strokes, called *matras*, attached to the character. Ligatures are used to indicate consonant clusters. The Brahmi script was first deciphered by James Princep although I find it difficult to believe that they could not find a single Indian who was capable of deciphering the Brahmi script**
31	**Caste**	**Derived from Portuguese Casta, Caste has a meaning quite distinct from Varna which has been accepted as being part of the tradition. Caste according to the Portuguese means a race or a breed. Varna makes no such distinction and to ascribe racial motivations for a system based on division of labor depending on individual inclinations and which is a meritocracy to boot, is totally unconscionable, but that is exactly what the colonial power did with great success . The Sanatana Dharma makes no apologies for being a meritocracy based on competency and character and it is only after the advent of colonial rule that it took on the character of a racial and ethnic division based on birth. It is a tribute to the tenacity and persistence of the British that their viewpoint has prevailed and has been internalized by the Indic population for the most part. Yet it behooves those of us who know better to keep reminding everybody that the colonial viewpoint reflects a conjured up reality that has no relation to a core value nor is it derived from core beliefs held since antiquity. see also Varnashrama dharma.**
32	**Celestial (Equatorial)Coordinate System**	**the most commonly used astronomical coordinate system for indicating the positions of stars or other celestial objects on the celestial sphere . The celestial sphere is an imaginary sphere with the observer at its center. It represents the entire sky; all celestial objects other than the earth are imagined as being located on its inside surface. If the earth's axis is extended, the points where it intersects the celestial sphere are called the celestial poles; the north celestial pole is directly above the earth's North Pole, and the south celestial pole directly above the earth's South Pole. The great circle on the celestial sphere halfway between the celestial poles is called the celestial equator; it can be thought of as the earth's equator projected onto the celestial sphere. It divides the celestial sphere into the northern and southern skies. An important reference point on the celestial equator is the vernal equinox, the point at which the sun crosses the celestial equator in March. To designate the position of a star, the astronomer considers an imaginary great circle passing through the celestial poles and through the star in question. This is the star's hour circle, analogous to a meridian of longitude on earth. The astronomer then measures the angle between the angle between the vernal equinox**

		and the point where the hour circle intersects the celestial equator. This angle is called the star's right ascension and is measured in hours, minutes, and seconds rather than in the more familiar degrees, minutes, and seconds. (There are 360 degrees or 24 hours in a full circle.) The right ascension is always measured eastward from the vernal equinox. Next the observer measures along the star's hour circle the angle between the celestial equator and the position of the star. This angle is called the declination of the star and is measured in degrees, minutes, and seconds north or south of the celestial equator, analogous to latitude on the earth. Right ascension and declination together determine the location of a star on the celestial sphere. The right ascensions and declinations of many stars are listed in various reference tables published for astronomers and navigators. Because a star's position may change slightly (see proper motion and precession of the equinoxes), such tables must be revised at regular intervals. By definition, the vernal equinox is located at right ascension 0 h and declination 0 degrees.
33	Celestial equator,नाडिव्रुत्त, Nadivruth	The great circle on the celestial sphere halfway between the celestial poles is called the celestial equator
34		
35	decimal system	see also place value system, decimal system [Latin= of tenths], numeration system based on powers of 10. A number is written as a row of digits, with each position in the row corresponding to a certain power of 10. A decimal point in the row divides it into those powers of 10 equal to or greater than 0 and those less than 0, i.e., negative powers of 10. Positions farther to the left of the decimal point correspond to increasing positive powers of 10 and those farther to the right to increasing negative powers, i.e., to division by higher positive powers of 10. For example, 4,309=(4x10**3)+(3x10**2)+(0x10**1)+(9x10**0)=4,000+300+0+9, and 4.309=(4x10**0)+(3x10**-1)+(0x10**-’2)+(9x10**-’3)=4+3/10+0/100+9/1000. It is believed that the decimal system is based on 10 because humans have 10 fingers and so became used to counting by 10s early in the course of civilization. The decimal system was introduced into Europe c.1300. It greatly simplified arithmetic and was a much-needed improvement over the Roman numerals, which did not use a positional system. A number written in the decimal system is called a decimal, although sometimes this term is used to refer only to a proper fraction written in this system and
36		
37	Dasa	
38	Dharma	one of the four kinds of human aspirations, which are dharma, artha, kAma and moksha. dharma: "Righteous living." The fulfillment of virtue, good works, duties and

		responsibilities, restraints and observances - performing one's part in the service of society. This includes pursuit of truth under a guru of a particular Parampara and sAmpradaya. Dharma is of four primary forms. It is the steady guide for artha and kama. The word dharma is pregnant with meaning and is used synonymously with the English word religion although its meaning is quite different, with a degree of overlap.
39	Dravidian languages	
40	Druhyu	One of 5 clans Anus, Druhyus, Turvashas, Puru, Yadu, the sons of Yayati. Druhyu is the 3rd son of Yayati. His dynasty is listed in Chapter 23 of the Bhagavata Puraana.The descendants of Druhyu eventually went on to become Zarathushtrans , followers of Zarathushtra and subsequently formed the Aryamanush (Greek corruption Achaemenid) empire, e.g. Darius = Druhyu,Daryavahyu . For other Old Persian Sanskrit names see for instance, http:/indicstudies.us/Archives/Linguistics/Persian names.html. I recommend all the readers of Indic origin (and others) use Sanskritic names for Iranian kings. That will force us into a thought process that they were all a part of the Vedic civilization.
41		
42	ecliptic क्रांतीव्रुत	the great circle on the celestial sphere that lies in the plane of the earth's orbit (called the plane of the ecliptic). Because of the earth's yearly revolution around the sun, the sun appears to move in an annual journey through the heavens with the ecliptic as its path. The ecliptic is the principal axis in the ecliptic coordinate system . The two points at which the ecliptic crosses the celestial equator are the equinoxes . The obliquity of the ecliptic is the inclination of the plane of the ecliptic to the plane of the celestial equator, an angle of about 23 1/2 °. The constellations through which the ecliptic passes are the constellations of the zodiac .
43	Ekadasi, एकादसि	Ekadasi is the eleventh lunar day (Tithi) of the Shukla (bright) or Krishna (dark) Paksha (fortnight) respectively ,of every lunar month in the Hindu calendar (Panchanga).In Hinduism and Jainism, it is considered spiritually beneficial day. Scriptures recommend observing an (ideally waterless) fast from sunset on the day prior to Ekadasi until 48 minutes after sunrise on the day following Ekadasi. Ekadasi is a Sanskrit word, which means 'the eleventh'. It refers to the eleventh day of a fortnight belonging to a lunar month. There are two fortnights in a lunar month—the bright and the dark. So, Ekadasi occurs twice in a month, in the bright fortnight and the dark fortnight. The special feature of Ekadasi, as most people know it, is a fast, abstinence from food. This is how it is usually understood. In fact, the fast is only a practical expression and a symbol of something else that we are expected to do, which is of special significance to our personality.
44	epicycles	thegreatcircleonthecelestialspherethatliesintheplaneoftheearth'sorbit(calledtheplaneoftheecliptic).Becauseoftheearth'syearlyrevolutionaroundthesun,thesunappearstomoveinana

		nnualjourneythroughtheheavenswiththeeclipticasitspath.Theeclipticistheprincipalaxisint heeclipticcoordinatesystem.Thetwopointsatwhichtheeclipticcrossesthecelestialequatorar etheequinoxes.Theobliquityoftheeclipticistheinclinationoftheplaneoftheeclipticto theplane ofthecelestialequator,anangleofabout231/2°.Theconstellationsthroughwhichthe ecliptic passes are the constellations of the zodiac .
45	equinox, vernal equinox वसंतसंपत ,(Vasanth Sampat),autumnal equinox	either of two points on the celestial sphere where the ecliptic and the celestial equator intersect. The vernal equinox, also known as "the first point of Aries," is the point at which the sun appears to cross the celestial equator from south to north. This occurs about Mar. 21, marking the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. At the autumnal equinox, about Sept. 23, the sun again appears to cross the celestial equator, this time from north to south; this marks the beginning of autumn in the Northern Hemisphere. On the date of either equinox, night and day are of equal length (12 hr each) in all parts of the world; the word equinox is often used to refer to either of these dates. The equinoxes are not fixed points on the celestial sphere but move westward along the ecliptic, passing through all the constellations of the zodiac in 26,000 years. This motion is called the precession of the equinoxes . The vernal equinox is a reference point in the equatorial coordinate system .
46		
47		
48	Gaudapada	Proponent of Advaita Vedanta and well versed in Buddhism. His most celebrated work is the Kaarika (Gloss) on the Mandukya Upanishad
49		
50	Gotra	A term applied to a clan, a group of families, or a lineage - exogamous and patrilineal - whose members trace their descent to a common ancestor, usually a
51	Grihastya	The second stage of the varna Ashrama system, namely that of a householder or married man or woman.
52	Gunas	There are 3 Gunas , Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas and these three Gunas occur in each and every individual in varying degrees. The relative proportion of each in the total determines the essential nature of the individual. It follows that at any given time a individual, may exhibit different modes of behavior as his personality matures and develops. The son of a Brahmana may choose not to follow the priestly vocation and may elect to go into law. As a general rule of thumb one elects to be in a profession which utilizes his Gunas fully. For example Brahmanas tend to cluster around intellectual pursuits (teaching, legal, corporate management, administration etc. In the past the choice of professions available to Brahmanas were limited to priestly duties and the services he could render as a Minister to the Maharaja including mundane tasks such as accounting and cooking. In recent years substantial numbers of Brahmanas faced with increasing discrimination from their own government have elected to go into Business,

		so that his varna is that of a Vaisya, unless he maintains his competency and knowledge of the Vedic scripture and adheres to the injunctions of a Brahmana. Most Indian philosophers accept the view of the Samkhya philosophy
53	Guna varna Vyavastha	The Varna system, namely Guna Varna Vyavastha, that produced the Varnashrama Dharma was conscious of the fact that this was the world's early attempt at a meritocracy. That the system was eminently successful in its own way , I have no doubt because the resulting civilization flourished for well over 5 millennia, until its very foundations were attacked by barbarians from both within and without; by barbarians, whose notion of entertainment was to build a pyramid of skulls, in order to terrorize the local population to capitulate. The current system in place after the colonial power was done reinventing and reshaping it to its own specifications, and which goes by the name Caste, is so utterly different in all significant ways, that we can safely say it has little to do with the Hindu faith or Hindu traditions such as the Guna Varna Vyavastha. The vedic division of people into 4 Varnas (Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaisya and Shudra) is by Guna and Guna only and is known as the Guna Varna Vyavastha. The Asrama system refers to the four stages of one's life, namely Brahmacharya (life of an unmarried student), Grihasthya (life of a householder), Vanaprasthaya (life of a retired householder), sannyasa (life of a monk)
54	Hinduism	Also known as Sanaatana Dharma, the eternal faith; there are roughly 850 million Hindus in the world as of 2006 (see Dharma)
55	Indo-Aryan languages	A family of languages spoken over a large area of the Eurasian land mass;see Indo-European Languages
56	Indo-European languages	A family of languages spoken over a vast geographical area from India to most parts of Europe.
57	Indo-Iranian languages	the Indo Iranian branch of the Indo Europrean language family , spoken in central asia,iran and the Indian subcontinent
58	Indology	Indology is a name given by Indologists to the academic study of the history, languages, and cultures of the Indian subcontinent. Strictly speaking it encompasses the study of the languages, scripts of all of Asia that was influenced by Indic culture It may be surprising to learn that the first pioneer in Indology was the 12th Century Pope, Honorius IV. The Holy Father encouraged the learning of oriental languages in order to preach Christianity amongst the pagans. Soon after this in 1312, the Ecumenical Council of the Vatican decided that-"The Holy Church should have an abundant number of Catholics well versed in the languages, especially in those of the infidels, so as to be able to instruct them in the sacred doctrine." The result of this was the creation of the chairs of Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldean at the Universities of Bologna, Oxford, Paris and Salamanca. A century later in 1434, the General Council of Basel returned to this theme and decreed that –"All Bishops must sometimes each year send men well-grounded in

		the divine word to those parts where Jews and other infidels live, to preach and explain the truth of the Catholic faith in such a way that the infidels who hear them may come to recognize their errors. Let them compel them to hear their preaching." 1. Centuries later in 1870, during the First Vatican Council, Hinduism was condemned in the "five anathemas against pantheism" according to the Jesuit priest John Hardon in the Church-authorized book, The Catholic Catechism. However, interests in Indology only took shape and concrete direction after the British came to India, with the advent of the discovery of Sanskrit by Sir William Jones in the 1770's. Other names for Indology are Indic studies or Indian studies or South Asian studies. Political motivations have been always dominant in the pursuit of Indological studies right from the outset since the time of Sir William Jones, when he discovered the existence of Sanskrit. In fact the British presence in India was steadily increasing long before the Battle of Plassey in 1757 CE, but so great was the insularity of the colonial overlord that it took almost almost three hundred years for a scholar like Sir William to show up in India after Vasco da Gama landed of the cost of Goa in 1492 CE, and notice the similarities between Sanskrit and the european languages
59		
60		
61	Indus script	As yet undeciphered. Most Indics believe that this was the forerunner of the Brahmi script…The brahmi script is the progenitor of almost all of the languages and scripts of India and most of the rest of South East Asia .The BrahmI script has all of the phonetic characteristics to be found in all the successor scripts of Asia. To suggest a semitic origin for a Brahmi script is highly problematical since semitic scripts (including all the Roman scripts of Europe) do not have the characteristic Vowel strokes that Brahmi scripts have whenever a vowel is appended to a consonant such as in आचार्य (the long 'a' vowel is represented by a vertical stroke)
62		
63		
64	Indus Valley Civilization	AKA Saraswathi Sindhu Civilization, the civilization that endured for several millennia in the Saraswathi and Sindhu (Indus) river valleys the people who inhabited these valleys also known as the Vedic Harappans by Bhagwan Singh. Most of the recent excavations indicate a heavy preponderance of settlements on the banks of the dried up Saraswathi river. Mohenjo Daro and Harappa represent a late phase of the civilization. European Indologists go to extraordinary lengths to make a distinction between the Vedic civilization and the SSC despite the fact they are located spatially and temporally in the same place and time. That they got away with this subterfuge for such a long time (it is

		still the official version of History in Indian text books) is a tribute to the farsightedness and tenacity of successive British administrators and scholars who always put British national interest before every other criterion including the truth.
65		
66	Iranian peoples	The ancient Iranians or Avestans, the people who composed the Avesta, have much in common with the Vedics. In fact it is believed by some that the Iranians are descended from the Druhyus. The language of the Avesta is easily discernible to those familiar with Sanskrit and the names of Persian Kings (the original names not the Greek version we learned in English history books) For instance the Sanskrit or Iranian version of Darius is Druhyu.
67	Jnana Yoga ज्नान	the path of knowledge Jñāna (also spelled "Gyāna"; Devanagari घ्यान) is the Sanskrit term for knowledge. In Hinduism it means true knowledge, PAra Vidya, the knowledge that one's self atman is Ultimate Reality Brahman. In Buddhism, it refers to pure awareness that is free of conceptual encumbrances, and is contrasted with Vijnana, which is a moment of 'divided knowing'. Jnana yoga is one path (marga) towards moksha (liberation), while Yoga offers different paths for different temperaments such as Bhakti and Karma Yoga.
68	Jivanmukta	Adi Sankara gives the true definition of a Jivanmukta - The great souls he says , calm and tranquil, live, regenerating the world like the spring; and themselves having crossed the ocean of embodied existence, and death, help those who struggle, for the same end, without thew least trace of personal motives or advantage
69	Jyotisha	one of the 6 Vedangas, also known as the science of light .It includes the study of the motion of Celestial Objects or Astronomy and the effects of the forces arising from these bodies and their effects on the human mind. It is the hypothesis of Vedic Astrology that such effects can be predicted by studying the relative location of the planets and the stars . Jyotisha is often discussed as the instructional element of the Rig Veda, and as such is a Vedangas, or "body part" of the Vedas. Jyotisha is called the Eye of the Veda, for its believed ability to view both phenomenal reality and wisdom itself. Part of a larger Vedic curriculum including mathematics, architecture, medical and military applications.
72	Kalpasutras	constitutes part of the Vedanga consists of Grhyasutras, Dharmasutras, Sulvasutras, Srautasutras.

73	KAma ,काम	"Pleasure,desire,wish, love; enjoyment." Earthly love, aesthetic and cultural fulfillment, pleasures of the world (often used in the sense of sexual desire, but not necessarily so), the joys of family, intellectual satisfaction. Enjoyment of happiness, security, creativity, usefulness and inspiration. An essential ingredient for the emotional health of an individual and recognized as such by the ancient Vedics. Kama is one of the four Purusharthas or goals of life, the others being dharma , artha and moksha.
74	Kaarika	Gloss or explanatory text of an original text, such as the Kaarika of the Mandukya Upanishad by Gaudapada
75	Karma Yoga	Karma yoga, or the "discipline of action" is based on the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita, a holy scripture of Hinduism. One of the four pillars of yoga, Karma yoga focuses on the adherence to duty (dharma) while remaining detached from the reward. It states that one can attain Moksha (salvation) by doing his duties in an unselfish manner. A great portion of the Bhagavad Gita is engaged in discussing the efficacy of various Yogas towards the goal of self realization or Moksha. Initially Arjuna is bewildered, when Bhagavan says that the Yoga of Knowledge is superior to the Yoga of action , even though desireless it may be. Why then do you ask me to fight asks an exasperated Arjuna of his friend and mentor, if such be the case. The answer by Bhagavan and elucidated by Adi Sankara in his Bhashya is one of the major insights of this lovely Celestial song. As explained by Adi Sankara, Karma Yoga consists of 4 principles 1. Giving up an egoistic attitude (BG 18-46),2. Giving up the hankering for the fruits or results of one's action (BG 2-39), 3. Maintaining equalimity in the face of desirable andhappy circumstances as well as undesirable and not so pleasant situations (BG 2-48)4. Surrendering of all actions as an offering to the Lord (Ish
76	Kshatriya, क्षत्रिय	the varna identified in the classical Indic tradition as those entitled to exercise military power and perform sacrifices, the dominant Guna in the Kshatriya varna is one of Rajas, and a passion for action. It is your Dharma to engage in action protect the aged and infirm and the children and women in your protection. It is better to follow ones own Dharma (dictated by ones Gunas) admonished Sri Krishna to Arjuna than to try something, however beguiling, which is not so suited
77	Kurgan	a region in Europe from where the putative immigration of the mythical Aryan race took place
78	Kushana Empire	
79		
80		
81	mananam	part of the process of gathering of kowledge using techniques such as sravanam,mananam and nididhyasanam. Mananam means to ponder over the material that one has read or heard
82	Metonic cycle	a cycle whereby every three years a lunar month is added to bring the lunar cycle in

		sunchronization with the solar cycle. It turns out that it takes nineteen years to bring the two cycles in synchronization , so that a new moon occurs exactly on the same solar day that it did 19 years ago.
83	Mitanni	when the Hittite and the Mitanni (2 neighboring kingdoms in Anatolia, present day Turkey signed a treaty they invoked the blessings of their Gods . The invocation is addressed to the Nasatyas, Mitra and Varuna,Hindu Vedic deities from a distant past
84	Moksha	"Liberation." Freedom from rebirth through the ultimate attainment, realization of the Self God, PArasiva. The spiritual attainments and superconscious joys, attending renunciation and yoga leading to Self Realization. Moksha comes through the fulfillment of dharma, artha and kAma (known in Tamil as aram, porul and inbam, and explained by Tiruvalluvar in Tirukural) in the current or past lives, so that one is no longer attached to worldly joys or sorrows. It is the supreme goal of life, called paramartha. This is a distinction between the DhArmic traditions originating in the Indian subcontinent from the very earliest time periods in history and other religious belief systems. The propensity to cater to the higher needs (in the Maslow hierarchy) from the very inception of the tradition is a uniquely Indic development. Merely to emphasize this as a spiritual characteristic is to mnimize the
85	mumukshutwa	Pragmatic and psychological needs of the human species which is a distinctive characteristic of Indic dharma. An intense thirst for Brahmavidya or higher knowledge (Paara Vidya)
86		
87	Nakshatras	The concept of positing 27 Nakshatras in the sidereal zodiac goes back to antiquity at least in India. the ancients divided the sky in 27 or 28 lunar mansions or Nakshatras, characterized by asterisms (apparent groups of stars), one for each day that the Moon follows its track among the stars.
88		
89	nididhyasanam	the final step of the 3 step process of sravanam, mananam, nididhyasanam, involves deep meditation and requires mumukshutwa and titiksha
90	Nirukta	this treatise was authored by Yaska and deals with Etymology , a branch of Linguistics, the study of the roots of all words, made simpler by the intentional highlighting of Dhaatu in sanskrit. Yaska is one of the bright galaxy and plethora of broad spectrum philosophers among the ancient Vedics, who counted numerous skills in their repertoire linguistics being just one of their many fields of expertise
91	Nighantu	Yaska's Vedic Glossary,Nirukta is a commentary on the Nighantu
92	Nirvana	blown out or extinguished as in the case of a lamp. Nirvana is generally used to refer to a material life that has been extinguished, i..e. for one who has achieved freedom from rebirth. The term Nirvana is commonly used in Buddhism as the final stage a practitioner

		strives for . The word does not mean heaven and is analogous to Moksha in the Sanaatana dharma
93	Nischitaaartham, निस्चितार्थम	Engagement ceremony prior to a wedding. Literally means 'firming up' of the relationship and is usually commemorated with a Puja and an exchange of rings, gifts and invitations to the wedding ceremony
94		
95		
96	Pancha –	sanskrit term for five e.g. Panchabana,panchatantra
97	Paramparaपरंपरा	tradition,as in likhita Parampara (written tradition), srauta Parampara (oral tradition), guru Parampara, (the guru-disciple tradition)
98	Place Value System,ःतान	the most common sanskrit word for this is sthana which literally means place
99	Poornima,पूर्निम	full moon
100	Purana,पुराण	literally means the ancients. Traditional sanskrit texts dealing with diverse topics such as the creation of the world ,legends, genealogy of sovereigns, In the Indic context, puranas have special significance both from a temporal stand point and from a historical perspective
101	Purusha,Paurusheya,Apaurusheya	In Hinduism, Purusha ("Cosmic Man") is the "self" which pervades the universe. The Vedic divinities are considered to be the human mind's interpretation of the many facets of Purusha. According to the Rigvedic Purusha sukta, Purusha was dismembered by the devas -- his mind is the moon, his eyes are the sun, and his breath is the wind.In Samkhya, a school of Hindu philosophy, Purusha is pure consciousness. It is thought to be our true identity, to be contrasted with Prakrti, or the material world, which contains all of our organs, senses, and intellectual faculties.Amore restrcted meaning of purusha is youth or human (paurusheya).Hinduism in that sense is an Apaurusheya belief system as opposed to the revealed or prophetic faiths such as Judaism,Christianity or Islam which would therefore come under the category of paurusheya religions
102	PurushArtha	PurushArtha or ManushyArtheha is the pursuit of the four kinds of human aspirations, which are dharma, artha, kAma and moksha. The four pursuits in which humans may legitimately engage, also called chaturvarga, "four-fold good" , is a basic principle of Hindu ethics.
103	PramAnam, प्रमाणम	the process of gaining knowledge, sometimes used to express the goal as well as the means to attain knowledge, as in Apaurusheya PramAnam
104	Prasthanatrayi	Prasthanatrayi, literally, three points of departure, (IAST Prasthānatrayī) refers to the three canonical texts of Hindu philosophy, especially the Vedanta schools. It consists of: the anishads, known as Upadesha prasthana (injunctive texts),the Brahma Sutras,

		known as Nyaya prasthana (logical text),the Bhagavad Gita, known as Sadhana prasthana (practical text)
105	Precession of the Equinoxes	see also equinox.The earth revolves around the Sun once in 365 days 5 hours 48 minutes and 46 seconds. Considered from the earth, the Sun appears to complete one round of the ecliptic during this period. This is called a tropical year .In the span of a tropical year, the earth regains its original angular position with the Sun. It is also called the year of seasons since on this Earth-Sun cycle depends the occurrence, and timing, of seasons. If we consider the revolution of the Sun around the earth from one vernal equinox (around 21st March, when the day and night all over the globe are equal) to the next vernal equinox, it takes one tropical year to do so.However, if at the end of a tropical year from one vernal equinox to the next, we consider the position of the earth with reference to a fixed star of the zodiac, the earth appears to lie some 50.26 seconds of celestial longitude to the west of its original position. In order for the earth to attain the same position with respect to a fixed star after one revolution, it takes a time span of 365 days 6 hours 9 minutes and some 9.5 seconds. This duration of time is called a sidereal year .The sidereal year is just over 20 minutes longer than the tropicaEach year, the Vernal equinox will fall short by 50.26 seconds along the zodiac reckoned along the fixed stars. This continuous receding of the Vernal equinox along the zodiac is call
106	Proto-Indo-European	PIE for short is a constructed language for which there is no existence theorem . It is based on unproven hypothesis
107	Proto Dravidian	the alleged hypothetical ancestor language to the modern languages of Telugu, Tamil, Kannada and Malayalam. Again there is no proof that a single human ever spoke the language. There is no reference to such a language in any of the vast literary works of India south or north.
108	R	
109	Rajas	Raajasik individuals are filled with a desire and passion to undertake new projects and goad others into action. Many leaders exhibit a Raajasik temperamen
110	Raja Yoga	Raja Yoga, as outlined by Patanjali, describes eight "limbs" of spiritual practices, half of which might be classified as meditation. Underlying them is the assumption that a yogi should still the fluctuations of his or her mind: *Yoga cittavrrti nirodha.*
111	Ramayana	a Hindu epic in which Rama, avatar of Vishnu vanquishes Ravana and is reunited with his spouse Seetha
112	Rig Veda	The earliest and the most prominent of the Vedas, the compositions of the Ancient Indics who we will refer to also as the Vedics,held to be sacred and termed Sruti by many Hindus, the chief characteristic was their oral tradition
113	Roma_people	The name that the Gypsies are known by in Europe, reflecting their large numbers in Romania
114		

115	Sampradaya, सांप्रूदाय	In Hinduism, a SAmpradaya is a tradition encompassing a common philosophy but embracing many different schools, groups, or guru lineages (called *parampara*). By becoming initiated (diksha) into a parampara one automatically belongs to its proper sAmpradaya.
116	Sankaracharya, संकराचार्य	The great proponent of Advaita Vedanta. Bhagavatpada Acharya Sankara was a veritable institution masquerading as an individual There is controversy over the date of his birth, ranging from 509 BCE to 788 CE
117	Saankhya, सांख्य	
118	Sanskrit, Samskrtam संस्क्रतम	Sanskrit (संस्क्रतम saṃskṛtam).The adjective saṃskṛta- means "refined, consecrated, sanctified". The language referred to as saṃskṛtā vāk "the refined language" has by definition always been a 'high' language, used for religious and scientific discourse and contrasted with the languages spoken by the people.
119	Sattva,सत्व	Individuals who are predominantly sattvik are attached to happiness and to knowledge
120	satya,shuddhi	truthfulness in thought and speech
121	Shaastra or ShAstra or sastra शास्त्र	ShAstra is a Sanskrit word used to denote education/knowledge in a general sense. The word is generally used as a suffix in the context of technical or specialised knowledge in a defined area of practice. For example, Astra shastra means, knowledge about "Handling of weapons", Astra means weapons, and Shastra is their knowledge.Extending this meaning, the shastra is commonly used to mean a treatise or text written in explanation of some idea, especially in matters involving religion. In Buddhism, a shastra is often a commentary written at a later date to explain an earlier scripture or sutra.In the Indonesian language, 'sastra' is a word meaning 'literature'.
122	shabda pramaanam (Bhartrihari)	
123	Shatapatha Brahmana,शतपथ ब्रःमण	Shatapatha Brahmana (शतपथ ब्राह्मण, Brahmana of one-hundred paths) is one of the prose texts describing the Vedic ritual. It belongs to the *vājasaneyi madhyandina shakha* of the White Yajurveda. It survives in two recensions, Madhyandina and Kanva, with the former having the eponymous 100 brahmanas in 14 books, and the latter 104 brahmanas in 17 books. Linguistically, it belongs to the Brahmana period of Vedic Sanskrit, dated to the first half of the 1st millennium BC.Hindu scholars have dated it to around 1800 BC, based on the reference in it of migration from the Sarasvati river area to east India, because the river is said to have dried up around 1900 BC. The 14 books of the Madhyandina recension can be divided into two major parts. The first 9 books have close

		textual commentaries, often line by line, of the first 18 books, of the corresponding Samhita of the Yajurveda. The following 5 books cover supplementary and ritualistically newer material, besides including the celebrated Brihadaaranyaka Upanishad as most of the 14th and last book. The Shatapatha Brahmana was translated into English by Prof. Julius Eggeling, in the late 19th century, in 5 volumes published as part of the Sacred Books of the East series. Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shatapatha_Brahmana"
124		
125		
126	Shakti,शिक्त	the female energy principle, in the Indic tradition ,the primordial icon of strength and energy is associated with the feminine gender
127	Shaanti	peace of mind attained through the disciplines of Raja Yoga
128	Shaucha	
129	Sidereal Day	A mean sidereal day is about 23h56m in length. Due to variations in the rotation rate of the Earth, however, the rate of an ideal sidereal clock deviates from any simple multiple of a
130	Sidereal Month	Sidereal month The actual period of the Moon's orbit as measured in a fixed frame of reference is known as a sidereal month, because it is the time it takes the Moon to return to the same position on the celestial sphere among the fixed stars (Latin: sidus): 27.321 661 days (27 d 7 h 43 min 11.5 s) or about 27 ⅓ days. This type of month has appeared among cultures in the Middle East, India, and China in the following way: they divided the sky in 27 or 28 lunar mansions, characterized by asterisms (apparent groups of stars), one for each day that the Moon follows its track among the stars.
131	Sidereal Time	During the course of one day, the earth has moved a short distance along its orbit around the sun, and so must rotate a small extra angular distance before the sun reaches its highest point. The stars, however, are so far away that the earth's movement along its orbit makes a generally negligible difference to their apparent direction (see, however parallax), and so they return to their highest point in slightly less than 24 hours. A mean sidereal day is about 23h56m in length. Due to variations in the rotation rate of the Earth, however, the rate of an ideal sidereal clock deviates from any simple multiple of a civil clock.
132	Sidereal Year	In order for the earth to attain the same position with respect to a fixed star after one revolution, it takes a time span of 365 days 6 hours 9 minutes and some 9.5 seconds. This duration of time is called a sidereal year .The sidereal year is just over 20 minutes longer than the tropical year; this time difference is equivalent to 50.26 seconds of celestial longitude.Each year, the Vernal equinox will fall short by 50.26 seconds along the zodiac reckoned along the fixed stars.

133	smrti,स्मृति	that which is remembered, . There are a number of texts that are specifically classed as smrti and are mostly named after the name of the rshi expounded on the smrti such as Parashara smrti, Manu smrti and Yajnavalkya smrti
134	Solar Day	Solar time is measured by the apparent diurnal motion of the sun, and local noon in solar time is defined as the moment when the sun is at its highest point in the sky (exactly due south in the northern hemisphere and due north in the southern hemisphere). The time taken for the sun to return to its highest point is exactly 24 hours, or a solar day.
135	Sramana tradition	A śramaṇa is one who performs acts of mortification or austerity. According to the definition, a being is himself responsible for his own deeds. Salvation, therefore, can be achieved by anybody irrespective of caste, creed, color or culture. The cycle of rebirth to which every individual is subject is viewed as the cause and substratum of misery. The goal of every person is to evolve a way to escape from the cycle of rebirth, namely by discounting ritual as a means of an emancipation and establishing from the misery of Saṃsāra, through pious religious activities.. The term has been used in the past as a synonym for the Baudhik tradition
136	Srautasutras	Srauta is the adjectival form of Sruti (that which is heard)and is one of the 4 constituent sutras in the Kalpasutra (see also Sulvasutra)
137	sravanam	comes from the same root as sruti. Essentially means learning by listening. Sravanam, mananam, nididhyasanam is the 3 step process towards Brahma vidya and self realization
138	sruti, ःेुित	that which is heard as opposed to that which is remembered (smrti). The smrti were composed by famous rishis and we have
139	Sulvasutras	The Sulvasutras (or Sulbasutras) or aphorisms of the cord (measurements were made using a string stretched between 2 pegs). The resulting mathematical manipulations needed to solve the problems of finding areas and volumes of reasonably complex shapes formed the subject matter of the sulvasutras.The Sulvasutras were part of the Kalpasutra appendices to the Veda.Kalpasutras consisted of Grhyasutras ,Srautasutras,Dharmasuturas and sulvasutras. The Kalpasutras in turn are part of theVedanga (limbsof the Veda)comprising of Chandas (metere).Nirukta(etymology), Vyakarana Grammar, Jyotisha (Astronomy and astrology) and Kalpasutras.0ne set of such Sutras are the Kalpa Sutras which consisted of Srauta Sutras, Dharma Sutras, Grihya Sutras and Sulva Sutras. The Srauta Sutras give elaborate rules for the performance of Vedic sacrifices; the Grihya Sutras deal with domestic religious ceremonies; the Dharmasutras contain the rudiments of Hindu Law and the Sulva Sutras form the earliest source of Hindu Mathematics
140		

141	Tamas	Tamas is inertia born of ignorance. It enshrouds the discrimination of man and inclines him to indolence, sleep and renders him inert. By nature it is destructive
142	Tiithi	Tithi/ Lunar Day - The area covered by the Moon in its transit away from Sun, computed for the moment of its conjunction with Sun to its true longitude at the moment of the epoch. It is obtained by subtracting the Longitude of Sun from the longitude of Moon. A tithi is completed when the longitude of Moon gains exactly 12 degrees or its multiple on that of Sun and therefore there are 30 tithis in a lunar month http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tithi
143	titiksha	Titiksha ***titiksa*** (Sanskrit) [from the verbal root *tij* to urge, incite to action, be active in endurance or patience] Patience, resignation, endurance; not mere passive resignation, but an active attitude of patience in supporting the events of life. Mystically, the fifth state of raja yoga -- "one of supreme indifference; submission, if necessary, to what is called 'pleasures and pains for all,' but deriving neither pleasure nor pain from such submission -- in short, the becoming physically, mentally, and morally indifferent and insensible to either pleasure or pain" (VS 93). The meaning however is not of a cold, heartless, impassive attitude towards the sufferings of others, but an active positive attitude, so far as one's individual pleasures or pains are considered, but likewise involving an active attitude of compassion for the tribulations and sufferings of others. The same thought is involved in the title Diamond-heart, given to adepts: as hard and indifferent to one's own sorrows as the diamond is hard and enduring, yet like the diamond reflecting in its facets as in mirrors the sufferings and sorrows of all around. Also personified as a goddess, the wife of Dharma (divine law) and daughter of Daksha.
145	Upanishads	Of the one hundred and eight extant Upanisads sixteen were recognized by Adi Sankara as authentic and authoritative. In his commentary on the Vedanta Aphorisms he included quotations from six. On the other ten he wrote elaborate commentaries. It is these ten which...have come to be regarded as the principal Upanisads: Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Chandogya, Brhadaranyaka, Aitareya, and Taittiriya."
146	Urheimat	A postulate that the Proto Indo European people (another postulate) originally lived in a common homeland or Urheimat at some distant past. While this is a very beguiling

		assumption, there is absolutely no evidence in Archaeology of such a Urheimat. It is purely a hypothetical construct only of academic interest. See the translations of the passages from the Rg quoted in the section on AIT, in the context of the discussion on the debate of the origin of the Vedic people.
147		
148		
149	Tocharians	A people who lived in the Tarim basin of current day China, and who spoke a Indo European language
150		
151	Vaisya	One who benefits humanity by his effortsand specialization in trade, commerce and agriculture. The commercial sector of society
152	Varna asrama dharma	The system,namely Guna Varna Vyavastha, that produced the Varnashrama Dharma was conscious of the fact that this was the worlds early attempt at a meritocracy. That the sytem was eminently successful in its own way , I have no doubt because the resulting civilization flourished for well over 5 millennia, until its very fouundations were attacked by barbarians from both within and without by Barbarians, whose notion of entertainment was to build a pyramid of skulls, in order to terrorize the local population to capitulate. The current system in place after the colonial power was done reinventing and reshaping it to its own specifications, and which goes by the name Caste, is so utterly different in all Significant ways that we can safely say it has little to do with the Hindu faith or Hindu traditions such as the Guna Varna Vyavastha
153	Vedic civilization	the civilization of the people who composed the Vedas and the vast literature of cosmic proportions associated with the SanAtana Dharma
154	Vedics or the Vedic people	the people who composed the Vedas and their Universe of allies and adversaries
155		
156	Vedic Saraswati River	The Saraswati river is mentioned in several verses in the Rg at least 50 times as a river flowing from the mountains to the sea. Satelllite data has shown evidence of a dried up river bed. Some examples of these quotations are given in the AIT page,http://www.indicethos.org/AIT/. All the AIT and their progeny ignore this significant fact.It is as if the relevance of the reference to the Saraswati is of no significance at all
157	Vernal Equinox	see equinox
158	Vishnu,विश्नु	sustainer of the Universe, whose Avatars came down to earth from time to time to reestablish order in the universe.the Srimad Bhaagavatam is a chronicle of the avatars of Vishnu
159	Vivaaha,विवाह	marriage ceremony

160	**Yogasastra, योगशास्त्र**	**The means to attain Moksha or Self Realization , a knowledge of Metaphysical aspects of the human consciousness**
161	**Yuezhi**	**the Chinese name for the Kushans who invaded India. The conventional date for this invasion is**
162	**Yuga,युग**	**an era of the world**